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A YEAR IN RUSSIA

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BY

MAURICE BARING

AUTHOR OF "WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MANCHURIA," ETC.

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TO

LADY CONSTANCE LYTTON

"Vieni a veder Montecchi e Cappelletti,
Monaldi e Filippeschi, uom senza cura;
Color già tristi e costor con sospetti.
Vien, crudel, vieni e vedi la pressura
De' tuoi gentili, e cura lor magagne:
E vedrai Santafior come si cura.
Vieni a veder la tua Roma, che piagne,
Vedova, sola, e dì e notte chiama:
Cesare mio, perchè non m' accompagne?"

DANTE (*Purg. VI.*)

"Une nation ne se sépare jamais de son passé sans de cruels déchirements."

"Why, Sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government."

DR. JOHNSON

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PREFACE

THE basis of most of these chapters is composed of letters contributed during the current year to the *Morning Post*, by whose kind permission they are here republished. They reflect the fleeting ideas, the passing moods of the moment; but as the various moments of which they reflect some kind of image form part of what must constitute an eventful chapter of Russian history, I have thought that it would be worth while to republish them, so as to furnish some kind of record of what people were thinking and saying while the interesting things—which history will relate—were happening, and so as to give a few sidelights showing the attitude of "the man in the street" during the hours of crisis. Such sidelights tend to show how little even the greatest crises in the lives of States affect the daily life of the average man. The people who cry out that the state of things is intolerable and not to be borne are, for the most part, well-to-do people who work up their indignation towards the end of a good dinner. The people who to the far-off looker-on seem to be undergoing intolerable oppression are themselves lookers-on, and they scarcely look, hardly realise and seldom say anything.

I have endeavoured in these chapters to present

impartially the widely divergent points of view of various people; at the same time I have made no attempt to disguise the whereabouts of my sympathies, being mindful of the sage, who, as Renan translates him, says: "Ne sois pas trop juste, et n'affecte pas trop de sagesse de peur d'être un niais."

These sidelights being the reflections of fugitive phases, I have made no attempt to introduce an element of consistency into them, nor have I in the light of subsequent events tried to modify the effect of the hopes which proved to be illusory or of the fears which were groundless—hopes and fears which I myself shared with those by whom I heard them expressed.

To those who take a serious interest in the Russian evolution I would suggest two valuable books, "The Crisis in Russia," by Professor Milioukov (London: Fisher Unwin, 1905), and "La Crise Russe," by Maxime Kovalevsky (Paris: Giard & E. Brière, 16, Rue Soufflot, 1906).

"Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia," by the same author (Nutt, 1891), will be useful to the student of the past history of Russia. Nor can one too often recommend "L'Empire des Tsars," by M. Leroy-Beaulieu. Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's work on Russia needs no recommendation. All these books, which deal with the past of Russia, will help the student to understand what is happening at present; for without some knowledge of the past history of Russia, what is now taking place cannot but be incomprehensible.

St. Petersburg

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is nothing else but a collection of notes, a bundle of impressions gathered during a year's stay in Russia. It lays no claim to be either exhaustive or even of any practical use to the serious student of the Russian Evolution. It is written for the ignorant, and with the object of helping them to decide whether they wish to take an interest in what is now happening in Russia, or not. I cannot take them into the house and show them all over it from floor to ceiling with the knowledge and authority of a master-builder; all I can do is to open a small window and ask them to look through it and observe certain things, pointing out how far these things are typical of the whole; and my hope is that the glimpses I have given them will enable them to decide whether they wish to go and knock at the front door and investigate for themselves.

This book consists solely of a record of things I have seen and heard myself in Russia during an interesting year of the history of that country. My experience of English opinion on Russian things has convinced me that in order to make such a record as intelligible as possible, a great deal of introduction and explanation

would be necessary. The reason of this is that the ignorance in England about Russia is extraordinary; and most of the current literature—I mean the books published on Russian affairs—instead of dispelling that ignorance, succeed rather in increasing it. Russia and Russian affairs are so little known in England that the country has proved a happy hunting ground for sensational writers of fiction and still more sensational purveyors of facts. Leaving the writers of fiction out of the question, the chief bar which seems to separate writers about Russia from a just estimate and a valuable appreciation of that country is the language. It is possible to convey information about Russia if you are ignorant of the Russian language; and such information may prove to be not only useful, but of surprising interest to people who are totally ignorant of the country. But unless you are acquainted with the Russian language it is impossible to acquire an intimate knowledge of the Russian people, and it is difficult to understand many things which happen in Russia.

I had, therefore, the intention, before proceeding to a record of any things I had seen myself, to collect and convey the impressions I had received of the Russian character and of Russian life in various classes, correcting and illustrating my impressions by those of others who have worked in the same field, and by evidence drawn from Russian literature. I meant to try and illustrate books by examples taken from life, and throw light on events and people by examples taken from literature; but I found when I began to do this that the writing of such an introduction was equivalent to the writing of two large books, one on the Russian

people and one on Russian literature, a task which I still hope to accomplish some day, but for which I do not at present feel sufficiently equipped. Moreover, even were I sufficiently equipped, the writing of two such books cannot be accomplished in a hurry in a country which is in a state of political effervescence. I have therefore sadly resigned myself to work backwards, and give to the public my record of raw facts first and the explanation at a later date.

Nevertheless in giving this collection of scraps to the public I still have an aim and a purpose. As I have said, Englishmen are amazingly ignorant of Russia; not only because they deliberately prefer the works of sensation-mongers to those of really well-informed writers like Sir D. M. Wallace or M. Leroy-Beaulieu, but also because, when they honestly seek for truth in the newspapers which are by way of being serious, they are almost invariably misled. On the other hand Englishmen who live in Russia, even if only for a short period—such as officers from the Indian Army who come out on leave to learn the language—find no difficulty in forming a just appreciation of the country and its people. It has always struck me that if any such person were to write a record of what he saw and thought, that record would have a real value because it would constitute an aspect of the truth and not an aspect of the lie. This is therefore my aim, and it is the only merit I claim for this work. It contains aspects of things, seen by some one whose object was to try and understand the ordinary and not to invent the extraordinary. And therefore, although my work has no sort of claim to be taken seriously, either

as history, or as a manual of useful information, it will have the negative merit of being free from any attempt at sensationalism, and, I hope, the positive merit of containing some aspects of the truth, some unvarnished record of *la chose vue.*

If what I have written leads others to take an interest in Russia and to go and see for themselves, and to treat exhaustively in a masterly fashion the things at which I have hinted incompletely and haltingly, I shall feel amply rewarded.

Somebody might object that even if we are totally ignorant of Russia in England there is no great harm done, that Russia is a far-off country with an impossibly difficult language; why should we bother about it? To this I would reply that the British people have shown themselves to be gravely concerned about the increasing competition with which the Englishman has to contend in all branches of life, and at the alarming improvement in the methods of his neighbours, which is met by no similar improvement at home. British trade, British influence, are rapidly, it is said, being outstripped. Remedies, such as protection, are suggested. As to whether such a remedy would prove efficacious or not I have no idea; but one practical reason of our stagnation in certain matters cannot fail to strike the most indolent observer. Our neighbours are well and practically educated. We are not. Is not this fact the cause of a great many things? If we want to remedy an evil we must look for the cause. I firmly believe that the unpractical education which is given to so many of us is largely responsible for the comparative stagnation of Englishmen in matters of trade and enterprise, compared

with the sedulous efforts of the citizens of other countries. I am not advocating the introduction of a purely continental system of education, nor would I like to see our system of athletics disappear; but it is obvious that there is not and never will be any danger of either of these two things happening. But I never mean to lose an opportunity of advocating a radical reform in the old-fashioned strictly classical education given and received at our public schools and rendered necessary by the obstinacy of our universities, owing to which Greek and Latin are taught (but no longer learned except by a slender minority), to the exclusion of all other useful knowledge.

The mass of boys who now learn nothing because Greek and Latin mean nothing to them, would gladly assimilate something which would be useful to them in after life: for instance, some smattering of their own history, some mastery of the English tongue, or the knowledge of a modern language.

There is no country where the disadvantage at which an Englishman finds himself compared to his continental rivals is made so plain as in Russia. In Russia there is, and there will be even more in the future, an immense field for foreign enterprise. The Germans have taken, are taking, and will take the utmost advantage of this fact. The English are content to send advertisements here, written in the English language, and never dream of trying to learn Russian themselves.

A working knowledge of the Russian language is acquired here by the average British officer, working for an examination, in the course of six months.

Therefore this difficulty, though serious, is not insurmountable. This, then, is the practical reason which I advance for the furthering of knowledge about Russia. I say that such knowledge is useful and advantageous to Englishmen. I have another reason for wishing such knowledge to be propagated, which is personal and moral, but not sentimental. It is this. I confess that I entertain perhaps a foolish desire for goodwill among nations. Of course I know very well that rivalries and conflicts must exist. Sometimes such rivalries and conflicts are the result of a fundamental antagonism and of the struggle for existence. But sometimes they are merely the outcome of misunderstanding and prejudice.

One of the wickedest things which shelters itself under the holy name of patriotism is the spirit which stirs up such prejudice and incites one country against another groundlessly by playing on ignorance and popular passion. With regard to Russia this has been done with considerable success. So far from considering such action to be patriotic, I consider it to be criminal; and although it may not be of the slightest interest to any one to hear this opinion expressed, to express it is a pleasure which I cannot deny myself. Whatever faults this book may contain, I mean to make up for the disappointments which it has caused me by indulging to the full in the luxury of saying exactly what I think in its pages. I cannot, unfortunately, hope to be among those masters who, speaking with inspired authority and unerring skill, compel the crowd to listen to their message, and at the sound of whose clarion-like utterance the "forts of folly" fall to the ground like the walls of Jericho. Mine is a humbler task, a more inglorious

ambition. I hope to be like an obscure mouse who nibbles in the darkness at the net which holds the lion captive. The mouse in his lifelong effort succeeds perhaps only in gnawing away a little; and I shall be content if I succeed in nibbling through the most tenuous thread of this great net of error, misunderstanding, and falsehood. There are other mice who will come after me, and who knows? perhaps one day the lion will be set free.

Finally, if it be asked from what point of view I approach my study of Russia, I would answer that I have no political views whatever in the matter; I have tried to make it my business to discover, understand, and explain the points of view of the people with whom I have met; with some of these views I sympathise, with others I do not. I have already said that I have not disguised my sympathies, but I have attempted to understand even what repelled me; my attitude is that of a sympathetic friend, for whether the Frenchman who said "L'intelligence est presque toujours la sympathie" was right or wrong, I am convinced that the converse is true, and that the spirit of carping is nearly related to stupidity.

A YEAR IN RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

ST. PETERSBURG TO GODZIADAN

August 8, 1905.

I LEFT St. Petersburg this evening for Manchuria. The one absorbing discussion in St. Petersburg is the question of the peace negotiations. Will there be peace or not?

IN THE TRAIN ON THE WAY TO IRKUTSK,
August 11*th.*

I started for Irkutsk on the 9th from Moscow. The train is crowded with people—officers going to the war, men of business going to Siberia, women and children. It is exceedingly hot. The last time I travelled in this Trans-Siberian express the winter had just given way to the leafless and bare aspect of early spring. Now we travel through great stretches of green plains, past huge fir-woods which are burnt and browned by the heat. The topic of the peace negotiations continues to prevail above all other topics. I am constantly asked my opinion. We have just received the latest

telegrams from Portsmouth. A man of business asked me if I thought there would be peace. I said "Yes." "There won't be," he replied. The railway line is fringed all the way with pink flowers, which, not being a botanist, I take to be ragged robin. At night the full moon shines spectral and large over the dark trees and marshes, and every now and then over stretches of shining water. The officers discuss the war from morning till night. They abuse their generals mercilessly. They say that it is impossible for Russians to look foreigners in the face. In my compartment there is an army doctor. He assisted at the battle of Mukden and is now returning for the second time to the war. He tells me that he wrote a diary of his experiences during the battle and that he is unable to re-read it now, so poignantly painful is the record. He trusts there will not be peace. He is sanguine as to the future. He loathes the liberal tendencies in Russia and detests Maxim Gorki. Yet he is no Jingo.

A gentleman from Moscow, and his wife, on the contrary, inveigh bitterly against the Government and the war. (I saw these same people again at Moscow after the December rising. Their house was situated in a street where the firing had been heavy and abundant. They had had enough of revolution and blamed the revolutionaries as severely then as they now blamed the Government.) We constantly pass trains full of troops going to the war. The men all ask the same question: "When is peace going to be?" They ask for newspapers and cigarettes. I gave some of them some bottles of whisky, which they drank off then and there out of the bottle. An

amusing incident happened last evening. We had stopped at a siding. Everybody had got out of the train. I was walking up and down the platform with one of the passengers. We saw a soldier throwing big stones at the window of the washing compartment.

"What are you doing that for?" we asked.

"I want to speak to his Honour," the soldier said; "he is washing his face in the washing-room." And through the window of the compartment, lit by electric light, we could see the silhouette of an officer washing his face.

"Why don't you go and knock at the door?" we asked.

"They are" (to speak of a person in the third person plural is respectful in Russian, and is always done by inferiors of their superiors)—"they are 'having taken drink' (*Oni Vipimshi*)," he replied, and then he added, lest we should receive a false impression, "His Honour is very good."

As we passed train after train of troops I reflected on the rashness of prophecy. How often I had heard it said in London, when the war broke out, that the line would break down immediately. Even when I reached Mukden I heard people say that the line could not possibly last through the summer, and here it is supporting gaily train after train in the second year of the war.

ON THE WAY TO CHITA, *August 20th.*

We arrived at Irkutsk on the morning of the 17th and took the train for Baikal. At Irkutsk station there was a train of sick soldiers returning from the

war. They begged for newspapers. The tedium of their long journey is, they say, intolerable. They say there has been a good deal of typhus in Manchuria.

We crossed the lake in the steamer. Its summer aspect is far less striking than the strange glory which it wears when it is frozen, and the distant mountains seem like "a sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice." In summer the waters are blue, the nearer hills grey and the distant mountains blue, but with nothing strange or unreal about them. Yet when the sunset silvered the grey tints and spread a ragged golden banner in the sky, the lake was extremely beautiful in another way. At Baikal station there was the usual struggle for places in the train. How well I remembered the desperate struggle I had gone through to get a seat in a third-class carriage at this same place last year! This time it was in the first-class carriage that the conflict took place. An engineer got into the same carriage as I did. He occupied one of the lower berths and I the other. Presently a lady arrived, bound for Chita, and looking for a place. She came into our carriage and asked to be allowed to have one of the lower berths. The engineer flatly refused and said that he had occupied his seat and had a right to keep it. I told her I would let her have mine with pleasure. She occupied it and went out. I moved my things into the upper berth. "Why on earth did you give up your seat?" the engineer asked. "You had a *right* to keep it." When the lady came back she said to me: "Ah! you are evidently not a Russian; no Russian would have given up his place."

The engineer turned out to be quite a good-natured sort of person, but there is something about trains which makes people who are by nature mild and good-natured turn into savages, and instils into them a passionate determination to cleave to their rights. The next morning another man arrived in our carriage, with a large basket and a second-class ticket. This upset the engineer, who complained to the "Controller" of the train, and the poor man was turned out. The engineer snorted and said: "There's an insolent fellow for you." The lady was the wife of an engineer who was employed at Chita; and she told me much about life in Chita: how hard times were, owing to the war, how scarce food was getting—

"Und wie so teuer der Kaffee,
Und wie so rar das Geld!"

The "Controller" of the train, an official in plain clothes, whose exact duties I was not able to determine, except that he was able to turn the second-class passenger out of our carriage, spent a day and a night with us. He and the engineer talked without ceasing of the meetings of the Zemstva all over the country; of the discontent of the public servants and of the imminence of a strike. They told me there would be a big railway strike, but I did not pay much attention to this, nor did I in the least realise the importance of what they were discussing. In one of the second-class carriages I made friends with two young officers who were going out to the war as volunteers, and two ladies, one the wife of an

officer already out there, and the other a hospital nurse. With them also was the son of the officer's wife, a student from Odessa, who told me many interesting things. He described to me in great detail the mutiny of the Black Sea Fleet, and he prophesied, if not a revolution, at least a great change in Russia in the immediate future. One of the carriages of the train was barred, and in it sat a political prisoner, a schoolmaster from Irkutsk. Some of my friends went to speak to him, but they came back in melancholy and disappointment, since they said this prisoner was hissing hatred and rage through the bars in an undignified and painful manner.

Soon after we left Baikal a young man joined us who said he was employed in a firm at Chita. He had brought with him some flowers from Irkutsk. These he carried in a large basket full of wet sand. They were a kind of pathetic stock but not "in fragrant blow"; poor, feeble, starved and rather dirty flowers they were. But in Transbaikalia flowers were rare, and he had paid 18 roubles, he said (£1 8s.), for this nosegay, and he was bringing them to Chita as a gift to the girl to whom he was engaged to be married. He looked after these flowers with the utmost care; the basket was put in my berth and, as it was full of water, a constant stream trickled down from it and made a small pond on the floor of the carriage.

August 20th. Later.

We are nearing Chita; the husband of the lady to whom I gave my place has arrived to meet her and take her home. He is an engineer. They are deeply en-

gaged in discussing local politics. The husband talks of a coming strike, and tells me that if I wish to see political meetings I had better stay in Chita. There are meetings every evening; some of them are dispersed by the police. I now realise the importance of flowers in this country; it is "a land of sand and ruin and gold." The young clerk has produced two perforated bouquet-holders (is there such a word?) and has carefully placed the flowers in them, with a sigh of relief. They have not quite faded, although they droop sadly. At Chita the lady and her husband get out. The engineer also. I am now alone in my carriage. Beyond Chita the country is mountainous and fledged with fir-trees.

August 21st.

The hilly country has ceased and we have once more reached the flat plains. This morning the guard brought a man into my carriage and asked me if I minded his sitting there. I said I did not mind. I offered him some tea. The man made no answer, and looked at me with a vacant stare. Then the guard laid him down at full length, and said, "This man is the assistant station-master at Manchuria station. He is drunk, but you need not be alarmed; he will be quite quiet." He was quiet; at Manchuria station he woke up from his stupor automatically, as though from frequent habit.

August 22nd.

We arrived at Manchuria station last night. The chaos that always reigns there is terrific. I had the utmost difficulty in obtaining permission to continue my

journey. The officials said I needed an extra paper, besides those I had with me, from the Chief of the Staff in Kharbin. The initial difficulty was to get one's ticket, as the crowd was dense and long. What quantities of people seem to be drawn to Manchuria, like filings to a magnet! An officer got me my ticket, and just when I had utterly despaired of being able to travel further, the gendarme brought me my permission to proceed. Then came the struggle for a place in a third-class carriage. This was successfully got through. I obtained an upper berth across the window. The compartment is crammed with people.

August 23rd.

We are travelling through the hills of northern Manchuria. News has arrived of the summoning of a new Duma. Now people say there will not be peace, and the war will become a national war because it will have the consent of the people. Others contest this; there are hot discussions. I have moved into a second-class carriage in which there is a photographer and a captain. I had my fortune told with cards by a lady in the train. She said I should soon meet a lot of friends and experience a change of fortune for the better.

August 28th.

We arrived at Kharbin the day before yesterday. The town seems to have got much bigger than when I left it last year. The climate has not improved, nor have the prices at the hotel diminished. I have already met some old friends of last year at the bank and at the staff. There is a new restaurant opposite the bank,

where a band plays the overture to "William Tell" without ceasing. Kharbin is empty. It appears that Linievitch does not allow officers to come here except on pressing errands. I dislike Kharbin more than any place I have ever seen in the world. The one topic is, of course, the peace negotiations. The matter is hotly discussed; some are in favour of peace, others vehemently against it. The news is contradictory. I have asked for leave to go to the front. I shall have to wait some days before I receive it.

August 31st.

I am laid up in bed, and Mr. Ostrovski of the Russo-Chinese bank has just been to see me. He has come from the staff, where they told him that news had been received from St. Petersburg that there would not be peace. Orders had come to dispatch everything available to the front with all possible speed and to get ready for an offensive movement.

September 1st.

Peace has been officially announced. Among the officers I have seen, opinions vary, but the men are delighted. They are tearing the telegrams from each other.

September 7th.

I arrived at Gonchuling yesterday. Gonchuling is now what Mukden used to be before the battle of Mukden was fought. It consists of dozens and dozens of small grey brick houses, with slate roofs, on one side of the line, and on the other side of the line is a small

Chinese town. The Military Attachés are here in their car. I am living with the Press Censors. People talk about peace as if it was not yet a fact. An officer, whose wife I met in the train coming out, has been sent to fortify positions. Kouropatkin's army is said to have received orders to advance. People express doubts as to whether the peace will be ratified, and there is talk of a revolution in Japan.

I have the intention of joining the 2nd Transbaikal Cossack battery, with which I lived last year. I have telegraphed to them to send horses to meet me at Godziadan, the Head Quarters of the Staff.

September 10th.

I have arrived at Godziadan. In the station is the train of the Commander-in-Chief. There is also a correspondents' car, where I have been put up and hospitably entertained by Boris Nikolaievitch Demchinsky, correspondent of a Russian newspaper. The news has come of the first *pour-parlers* which are to take place between the Russian and Japanese Commanders-in-Chief.

CHAPTER II

JEN-TZEN-TUNG

September 13th.

I ARRIVED at the quarters of the battery this morning. It is quartered in a village near the large Chinese town of Jen-tzen-tung on the Mongolian frontier. I started from Godziadan at eight o'clock in the morning on the 11th, when I found two Cossacks waiting for me, with a third pony for me to ride, saddled with my own English saddle, which I had left behind me last year. As we started one of the Cossacks said: "You must be careful with that pony, he throws himself." I wondered what this meant; whether the pony ran away, or bit, or kicked, or stumbled, or bucked, or fell, my experience of Chinese ponies being that they do all these things. I was not long in finding out; it meant that the pony took a sort of dive forward every now and then, tearing the skin off one's fingers in the effort to hold it up.

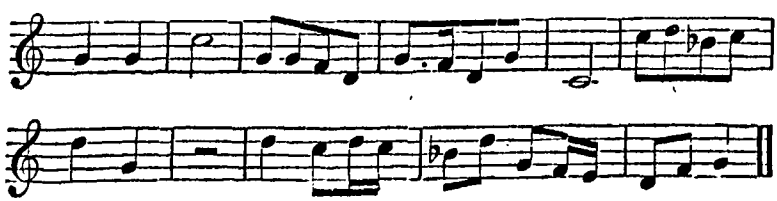
After we had ridden for about two hours, one of the Cossacks asked the other if he knew the way. The other answered that he did not. The first one told him he was a fool. "But," I interrupted, "as you have just come from Jen-tzen-tung, surely you know the way back."

"Oh!" they answered, "we came by quite a different way along the lines. But, *nichevo*, it doesn't matter. We shall get there somehow." We stopped for luncheon at an encampment of the Red Cross. I was entertained by the doctors and the hospital nurses. They expressed the most bitter and violently revolutionary sentiments. After luncheon we went on, asking the way of the Chinese in each village, our destination for the evening being the large town of Oushitai. At every village we asked, the Chinese answered by telling us how many lis (a li is 1⅓ of a mile) Oushitai was distant, and the accuracy with which they determined the distance was, as far as I could judge, amazing. We arrived at Oushitai at moonrise. We went into a yard where there was tea, and straw to lie on, and provisions, but the Cossacks refused to stay there because there were "soldiers" there. The Cossacks, being Cossacks and not "soldiers," often consider it beneath their dignity to mix with soldiers. So we had to find another yard, where we drank tea and slept until dawn the next morning, when we started once more. We halted at midday in a small Chinese village for our midday meal. It was a small, rather tumble-down village, with a large clump of trees near it. A Chinaman came out of a house, and seeing the red correspondent's badge on my arm, asked me if I was a doctor. To save the bother of explanation I said I was a doctor. Then he conveyed the information in pidgin-Russian that his son was ill, and requested me to cure him. I went into the house and he showed me a brown and naked infant with a fat stomach. I made him put out his tongue. It

was white. I asked what he had been eating lately. The Chinaman said raw Indian corn. I prescribed cessation of diet and complete repose. The Chinaman appeared to me to be much satisfied, and asked me if I would like to hear a concert. I said very much. Then he bade me sit down on the khan—the natural divan of every Chinese house—and to look ("*smotri*, *smotri*," he said). Presently another Chinaman came into the room and, taking from the wall a large and twisted clarion (like the wreathed horn old Triton blew), he blew on it one deafening blast and hung it up on the wall again. There was a short pause, I waited in expectation, and the Chinaman turned to me and said: "The concert is now over."

I then went to have luncheon with the Cossacks under the trees. The luncheon consisted of hard rusks (hard as bricks), made of black bread, swimming in an earthen bowl of boiling water on the top of which tea was sprinkled. When we had finished luncheon, and just as we were about to resume our journey, the Chinaman in whose house I had been entertained rushed up to me and said: "In your country, when you go to a concert, do you not pay for it?" The concert was paid for and then we started once more to ride along the mountainous roads, a flat green country, with few trees, and great pools of water caused by recent rain, through which we had to wade and sometimes to swim. Towards the afternoon the aspect of the country changed; we reached grassy and flowery steppes. It was the beginning of the Mongolian country. We met Mongols sitting sideways on their ponies, and dressed in coats of many colours. I have never felt quite

so tired in my life as while that interminable afternoon wore on. The distance from Godziadan to Jen-tzen-tung is eighty miles, and when the sun set, and the Cossacks announced that after arriving at Jen-tzen-tung we should have to ride yet two miles further to find the battery, I inwardly resolved that no force on earth should make me ride another inch that night. We arrived at Jen-tzen-tung at eight o'clock in the evening. There I found my old friend Kizlitzki, of the battery, who, as usual, was living by himself in Chinese quarters of immaculate cleanliness. His servant being the former cook of the battery who used every day to make "Boeuf Stroganoff," Kizlitzki gave me an excellent dinner and a most comfortable bed. The next morning I rode to the village, two miles distant, where the battery was quartered, and here I found all my old friends: Glinka, the doctor, Hliebnikoff, and others.

The house is a regular Chinese house, or series of one-storeyed houses forming a quadrangle, in which horses, donkeys, and hens disport themselves. We occupy one side of the house. Opposite us the owner lives. In the evening one hears music from the other side. I went to see what it was; a Chinaman lying on his back plays on a one-stringed lute, "und singt ein Lied dabei, das hat eine wundersame gewaltige Melodei." Something like this :—

The first question everybody asked me was whether peace had been declared or not. There has been some fighting here at the outposts since peace was declared.

September 15th.

This village is exceedingly picturesque. It lies in a clump of willow-trees and hard by there is a large wood which stretches down to a broad and brown river. Next to our quarters there is a small house where an old Chinaman is preparing three young students for their examination in Pekin. One of these Chinamen came this morning and complained that their house had been ruined by the Cossacks. We went to inspect the disaster. It turned out that one of the Cossacks had put his finger through one of the paper windows of the house, making thereby a small hole in it. The old teacher is quite charming. He recited poetry to us. When the Chinese recite poetry they half sing it. I had lately read a translation of a Chinese poem by Li-Tai-Po, which in the translation runs thus :—

"You ask me what my soul does away in the sky;
I inwardly smile but I cannot make answer;
Like the peach blossom carried off by the stream,
I soar away to a world unknown to you."

By means of a small piece of wood, a flower, and some water I made the Chinaman understand what poem I was alluding to, and he recited it for us. The Chinese asked me to tell them their fortunes by their hands. I said to one of them, at random, that I saw great riches in his hand, thinking it would please

him. The Chinaman said nothing, but later, when this Chinaman, who was a visitor, had gone, the others said to me: "You spoke true words. That man is a 'Koupeza' (pidgin-Russian for merchant) and he is enormously rich." These Chinamen take an acute interest in the result of the peace negotiations, and wish to be informed as to all sorts of details of which we are ignorant. The impression among the officers here is that it is a very good thing that peace has been concluded. "We ought to thank Heaven that our men have not been beaten again," one of them said, and he added: "It is silly to say that the higher authorities are the only guilty ones; we are all equally guilty."

September 16th.

We spend the time riding, reading, bathing, sleeping, and playing patiences.

Jen-tzen-tung is a large and most picturesque town. A constant stream of Mongols flows in and out of it. They wear the most picturesque clothes, silks and velvets of deep orange and luminous sea-green, glowing like jewels. We ride into the town to buy provisions, fish mostly. The wines sold at the shops are all sham and horribly nasty. At the corner of one of the streets there is a professional wizard, dressed in black silk embroidered with silver moons, and wearing the conical cap that wizards always do wear. You ask a question, pay a small sum and shake coins out of a cup three times, and according as the coins make an odd or even figure, the wizard writes down a sign on a piece of paper, and then he tells you the

answer to your question. The Chinese consult him before striking a bargain or setting out on a journey. I asked him whether I should get back all right? He answered that I could go home either by the East or the West, and that the West would be better, though I should meet with obstacles.

He refused to prophesy for more than a hundred days ahead.

In the evening, after dinner, we discussed politics and the Duma (that is to say the Duma as originally planned by the decree of August 6th). The doctor said that unless there were to be a constitution in Russia, he would emigrate abroad, as he did not choose that his children should be brought up in a country which was politically inferior to Turkey. He is hopeful about the Duma; he says Witte will be a national hero; and that a constitution is a foregone conclusion. Somebody said the peasants were hopeless. He hotly contested this, and said there was far more political sense among the peasants than among the rest of the population. He has had great experience of the peasants.

September 19th.

I had a long talk with Kizlitzki this afternoon. He is like a round peg in a square hole in this army. Strict discipline and impeccable order seem to him the first essentials of military life. The others don't understand this, although they are conscientious; but they like doing things in their own way, which is a happy-go-lucky way, and they think Kizlitzki is rather mad. Kizlitzki told me that at the battle of Ta-shi-

chiae, where he was in command of the battery, when he had made all the necessary arrangements, placed his guns, &c., he received orders to go and speak to a general; before he went, he warned his subordinates to leave everything as it was. When he came back he found that the battery, owing to the fancy of one of the subordinates, had been moved two miles from where he had placed it. So he had to fetch it back and arrange everything over again. The result was that it did not open fire until two in the afternoon, a fact which I had noticed at the time, although I was not with the battery then. He said he had never made such an effort of self-control as not to lose his temper when he saw what had been done. In the French or German, and I trust also in our army, Kizlitzki's methods would be taken as a matter of course. Here they are considered to be an unnecessary pose. On the other hand he is not in the least a formalist, a lover of red-tape, or a pedant; he merely considers elementary discipline to be necessary.

I had tea with a Chinese Mandarin. I do not know which was the more exquisite, his tea or his manners. In the evening we discussed writers of books. Hliebnikoff said he knew who was the greatest writer in the world, and when some one else asked who, he answered Dostoievski of course. The doctor vehemently disagreed with this. Hliebnikoff went out of the room in disgust. It is astonishing what a quantity of English novels these people have read in translations: Mrs. Humphry Ward, Rider Haggard, Stevenson, Kipling, Conan Doyle, Mark Twain, Jerome K. Jerome. The doctor admires Jerome enormously. I think there is a

human element in him which especially appeals to Russians.

September 21st.

A fine, hot, and glorious September day. The evening was one of those things that linger in one's mind like music. The sky was a very faint mauve, something between mauve and pink, like a hydrangea, or as Dante says :—

> "Men che di rose e più che di viole
> Colore aprendo,"

and, hanging over the delicate willow-trees, silvery in the half-light and faintly rustling, a large and misty moon—a moon made of ghostly fire. The days pass in pleasant monotony; visitors come from other divisions; but we go to bed about nine in the evening and get up very early. It is a delicious life. We often visit the Chinese professor in his peripatetic school. One of the students asked me whether in my country "you write and a big captain comes to look-see, and if all was not well, beats you." I said that practically this was the procedure of our competitive examinations.

September 27th.

Autumn has come and it is too cold now for the men to be encamped here out of doors, so we have moved into quarters in the town.

October 1st.

I left for Gunchuling, *en route* for Kharbin, with Hliebnikoff and another, and bade goodbye to the

friends who had so hospitably entertained me. (Two of them I was never to see again, for they died shortly after I left, one of typhoid and one of dysentery.) We arrived at Oushitai at five in the evening. The country is said to be infested by Hung-Hutzes, and some men were wounded by them yesterday in the environs of this place. At Jen-tzen-tung I met a merchant, whom I had known at Liaoyang, who had been caught by the Hung-Hutzes, but—

> "As no one present seemed to know
> His use or name, they let him go."

Jen-tzen-tung was on the extreme right flank of the Russian army. The army therefore extended eighty miles from the extreme right flank to the centre, and again another eighty miles from the centre to the extreme left flank. Oushitai was connected with Gunchuling by a kind of tram-railway drawn by horses.

October 6th.

In this tram we travelled to Gunchuling, and thence I proceeded to Kharbin by train.

CHAPTER III

THE STRIKE AND THE MANIFESTO OF OCTOBER (30TH) 17TH

MOSCOW, *November 3rd.*

MY return journey from Kharbin to Moscow was entirely uneventful until we arrived at Samara. At Irkutsk I had got a place in the Trans-Siberian express, which was crowded with all sorts and conditions of men: officers, merchants, three Germans, three Americans who had returned from working a mine in Siberia, a Polish student, and some ladies.

The first inkling that I received of the fact that a revolution was going on in Russia came to me in the following manner. We had crossed the Urals and had only been travelling thirteen days. We had arrived at Samara, when the attendant, who looked after the first-class carriage, came into my compartment and heaved a deep sigh. I asked him what was the matter. "We shan't get further than Toula," he said. "Why?" I asked. "Because of the unpleasantnesses" (*niepriyat nosti*). I asked, "What unpleasantnesses?" "There is a mutiny," he said, "on the line." We passed the big station of Sisran and arrived at the small town of Kouznetsk. There we were informed that the train

could not go any further because of the strike. Nobody realised the extent of the strike, and we expected to go on in a few hours. By the evening the passengers began to show some signs of restlessness. Most of them telegraphed to various authorities. A petition was telegraphed to the Minister of Ways and Communications, saying that an express train full of passengers, overtired by a long and fatiguing journey, was waiting at Kouznetsk, and asking him to be so good as to arrange for them to proceed further. There was no answer to this telegram. The next day a sense of resignation seemed to come over the company. Although every evening, towards dinner-time, one heard innumerable complaints such as "only in Russia could such a *bezobrazie* (literally an ugliness, *i.e.*, a disgraceful thing) happen," and one passenger suggested that Prince Kilkoff's portrait, which was hung in the dining-car, should be turned face to the wall. The Polish student, who had accompanied the Americans and made music for them, playing by ear any tune they whistled to him, and consequently a great many tunes from the Gaiety repertoire, played the piano with exaggerated facility and endless fioriture and runs. I asked an American mechanic who was with the mining managers whether he liked the music. He said he would like it if the "damned hell" were knocked out of it, which was exactly my feeling. But on the second day after our arrival my American friends left by road for Samara, to proceed thence by water to St. Petersburg. The passengers spent the time in exploring the town, which was somnolent and melancholy in the extreme. Half of it was a typical

Russian village built on a hill, a mass of brown huts; the other half, on the plain, was like a village in any country. The idle guards and railway officials sat on the steps of the station-room whistling. Two more trains arrived: a sanitary train and an ordinary slow passenger train.

The passengers from these trains wandered about the platform, mixing with the idlers from the town population. A crowd of peasants and travellers, engineers, and Red Cross attendants, soldiers, and merchants sauntered up and down in loose shirts and big boots, munching sunflower seeds and spitting out the husks till the platform was thick with refuse. A doctor who was in our train, and who was half a German, with an official training and an orthodox official mind, talked to the railway servants like a father. It was very wrong to strike, he said. They should have put down their grievances on paper and had them forwarded by the proper channels. The officials said that that would be waste of ink and caligraphy. "I wonder they don't kill him," said my travelling companion, and I agreed with him. Each passenger was given a rouble a day to buy food. The third-class passengers were given checks, in return for which they could receive meals. However, they deprecated the idea, and said that they wanted the amount in beer. They received it. Then they looted the refreshment room, broke the windows, and took away the food. This put an end to the check system. The feeling among the first-class passengers deepened. Something ought to be done, was the general verdict; but nobody quite knew what. They felt that the train

ought to be placed in a position of safety. The situation on the evening of the second day began to resemble that described in Maupassant's masterpiece, "Boule de Suif." Nothing, however, could be done except to explore the town of Kouznetsk. It was warm autumn weather. The roads were soft and muddy, and there was a smell of rotting leaves in the air. It was damp and grey, with gleams of pitiful weak sunshine. In the middle of the town was a large market-place where a brisk trade in geese was carried on. One man whom I watched failed to sell his geese during the day, and while driving them home at night talked to them as if they had been dogs, saying, "Cheer up, we shall soon be home." A party of convicts who belonged to the passenger train were working hard by the station, and implored the passing tribute of a sigh and a cigarette. Both were freely given. Convicts in Russia are always alluded to as "unfortunates." I met them near the station and they at once said, "Give the unfortunates something." In the evening, in one of the third-class carriages, a party of Little Russians, assistants in the Red Cross, sang songs in parts—melancholy, beautiful songs, with a strange trotting rhythm and no end and no beginning; and opposite their carriage on the platform a small crowd of moujiks gathered together and listened, saying that the men sang with cunning (*lovko paiout*).

On the morning of the fourth day after we had arrived the impatience of the passengers increased to fever pitch. A colonel who was with us, and who knew how to use the telegraph, communicated with Piensa, the next big station. For although the tele-

graph clerks were on strike they remained in the office conversing with their friends on the wire all over Russia. The strikers were most affable. They said they had not the slightest objection to the express proceeding on its journey, that they would neither boycott nor beat anybody who took us, and that if we could find a friend to drive the engine, well and good. We did. We found a friend, an amateur engine-driver, and an amateur engine, and on the 28th of October we started for Piensa. We broke down on the way. The engine-driver was supported by public contributions. The moment the engine stopped work all the passengers volunteered advice as to how it should be mended, one man producing a piece of string for the purpose. However, another stray engine was found, and we arrived at last at Piensa. There I saw mentioned in the telegrams the words "rights of speech and assembly," and I knew that the strike was a revolution. At Piensa the rage of the military—who had had their return journey from the Far East delayed—against the strikers was indescribable. They were lurching about the station in a state of inebriate frenzy, using language about strikes and strikers which is not fit to repeat. One of them asked me if I was a striker. We stopped at Piensa for the night. We started again the next morning for Moscow, but the train came to a dead stop at two o'clock the next morning at Riansk, and when I woke up the first-class attendant came, with many deep sighs, and said that we should go no further until the unpleasantnesses were at an end. But an hour later news came that we could go to Riazan in

another train, which we did. Riazan station, when we arrived, was guarded by soldiers. A train was ready to start for Moscow, but the scuffle for places in it was terrific. I found a place in a third-class carriage. Opposite me was an old man with a grey beard. He attracted my attention by the extraordinary courtesy with which he prevented a woman, with many bundles, from being turned out of the train by another moujik. I asked him where he came from. "Eighty versts from the other side of Irkutsk," he said. "I was sent there, and I am returning home now after thirteen years at the Government's expense. I was a convict." "What were you sent there for?" I asked. "Murder!" he answered very gently. The other passengers asked him to tell his story. "It's a long story," he said. "Tell!" shouted the other passengers. His story briefly was this: He had got drunk, set fire to a barn, and when the owner interfered he had killed him. He had served two years' hard labour and eleven years' banishment. He was a gentle, humble creature, with a very mild expression, like an apostle in disguise. He had no money, and lived on what other passengers gave him. I gave him a cigarette. He smoked a quarter of it and said he would keep the rest for the journey, as he had still got five hundred versts to travel. We arrived at Moscow at eleven o'clock in the evening and found the town in darkness, save for the glimmer of oil lamps. The next morning we woke up to find that Russia had been given a Magna Charta; that the railway and other officials had obtained the same concessions from the Government as the Barons had won from King John seven hundred years ago.

MOSCOW, *October 30th* (Old Style, *October 17th*).

The first thing which brought home to me that Russia had been granted the promise of a Constitution was this. I went to the big Russian baths. Somebody came in and asked for some soap, upon which the barber's assistant, aged about ten, said with the air of a Hampden, "Give the 'citizen' some soap" (*Daite grajdaninon mwilo*). Coming out of the baths I found the streets decorated with flags, and everybody in a state of frantic and effervescing enthusiasm. I went to one of the big restaurants. There old men were embracing each other and drinking the first glass of vodka to free Russia. After luncheon I went out into the Theatre square. There is a fountain in it, which forms an excellent public platform. An orator mounted it and addressed the crowd. He began to read the Emperor's Manifesto. Then he said: "We are all too much used to the rascality of the Autocracy to believe this; away with the Autocracy!" The crowd, infuriated—they were evidently expecting an enthusiastic eulogy—cried: "Away with you!" But instead of attacking the speaker who had aroused their indignation they ran away from him! It was a curious sight. The spectators on the pavement were seized with panic and ran too. The orator, seeing his speech had missed fire, changed its tone and said: "You have misunderstood me." But what he had said was perfectly clear. This speaker was an ordinary Hyde Park orator, and not to be confused with the University professors who afterwards spoke from the same platform. Later in the afternoon a procession of students arrived opposite my hotel with red flags, and collected outside the

Governor-General's house. He appeared on the balcony and made a speech, in which he said that now there were no police he hoped that they would be able to keep order themselves. He asked them also to replace the red flag which was hanging on the lamp-post opposite the palace by the national flag. One little student climbed like a monkey up the lamp-post and hung a national flag there, but did not remove the red flag. Then the Governor asked them to sing the National Anthem, which they did; and as they went away they sang the Marseillaise.

> "On peut très bien jouer ces deux airs à la fois
> Et cela fait un air qui fait sauter les rois."

At one moment a Cossack arrived, but an official came out of the house and told him he was not needed, upon which he went away amidst the jeers, cheers, hoots, and whistling of the crowd. The day passed off quietly on the whole, the only untoward incidents being the death of a woman and the wounding of a student and a workman while trying to rescue a student from the prisoners' van. A veterinary surgeon called Bauman was also shot on this day.

To-day for the first time I heard the phrase "Black Gang" used. I was standing on the doorstep of the Hôtel de France, when a woman rushed frantically up and said the "Black Gang" were coming. A student, belonging to a very good family, who was standing there, also explained that the "Black Gang" consisted of roughs who supported the autocratic cause. His hand, which was bandaged, had been severely hurt

while he was in the act of taking off his hat that day, by a Cossack who had beat it with a whip, thinking he was about to make a disturbance. He came up to my room and from the hotel window we had a good view of the crowd which proceeded to—

> "attaquer la Marseillaise en *la*
> Sur les cuivres, pendant que la flûte soupire
> En *mi bémol:* Veillons au salut de l'Empire."

MOSCOW, *November 7th.*

I went to see Maxim Gorki's new play at the Artistic Theatre of Moscow, "The Children of the Sun." It was the second night that it had been performed. M. Stanislavoshi, one of the chief actors of the troupe and the stage manager, gave me his place. The theatre was crammed. There is a scene in the play, where a doctor, living in a Russian village, and devoting his life to the welfare of the peasants, is suspected of having caused an outbreak of cholera. The infuriated peasants pursue the doctor and bash some one on the head. On the first night this scene had reduced a part of the audience to hysterics. It was too "actual." People said we see enough of our friends killed in the streets without going to the play for such a sight. On the second night it was said that the offensive scene had been suppressed. I did not quite understand what had been eliminated. As I saw the scene it was played as follows. A roar is heard as of an angry crowd. Then the doctor runs into a house and hides. The master of the house protests; a peasant flies at his throat and half strangles

him until he is beaten on the head by another peasant who belongs to the house. The play is full of interesting moments, and was played with the finished perfection which makes this theatre famous and unique. . .But M. Gorki has not M. Tchekoff's talent of representing on the stage the uneventful passage of time, the succession of the seemingly insignificant incidents of people's everyday lives, chosen with such skill, depicted with such an instinct for mood and atmosphere that the result is enthrallingly interesting. M. Gorki's plays have the faults and qualities of his stories. They are unequal, but contain moments of poignant interest and vividness. I do not think, however, that his gifts are pre-eminently suited for the stage.

CHAPTER IV

MOSCOW AFTER THE MANIFESTO

Wednesday, October 1st.

AT dinner at the Métropole Restaurant a strange scene occurred. At the end of dinner the band played the Marseillaise, and after it the National Anthem. Everybody stood up except one mild-looking man with spectacles, who went on calmly eating his dinner, upon which a man who was sitting at the other end of the room, and was rather drunk, rushed up to him and began to pull him about and drag him to his feet. He made a display of passive resistance, which proved effectual, and when he had finished his dinner he went away.

Thursday, November 2nd.

The outward aspect of the town during these days is strange. Moscow seems like a city which has been undergoing a siege. Many of the shops have got great wooden shutters. Some of the doors have a large red cross on them. The distress, I am told, during the strike was terrible. There was no light, no gas, no water, all the shops were shut; provisions and wood were scarce. This afternoon I went to see Bauman's

funeral procession, which I witnessed from many parts of the town. It was one of the most impressive sights I have ever seen. A hundred thousand men took part in it. The whole of the "Intelligenzia" (the professional and middle class) was in the streets or at the windows. The windows and balconies were crowded with people. The order was perfect. There was not a hitch nor a scuffle. The men walking in the procession consisted of students, doctors, workmen, people in various kinds of uniform. There were ambulances, with doctors dressed in white in them, in case there should be casualties. The men bore great red banners and the coffin was covered with a scarlet pall. As they marched they sang in a low chant the "Marseillaise," "Viechni Pamiat," and the "Funeral March" [1] of the fighters for freedom. This last tune is the most impressive. From a musician's point of view it is a shockingly bad tune; but then, as Du Maurier said, one should never listen to musicians on the subject of music any more than one should listen to wine merchants on the subject of wine. But it is the tune which to my mind is exactly fitting for the Russian revolution, with its dogged melancholy and invincible passion, as fitting as the "Marseillaise" (which, by the way, the Russian sings in parts and slowly) is totally unfitting. The "Funeral March" has nothing defiant in it; but it is one of those tunes which, when sung by a multitude, make one's flesh creep; it is commonplace if you will; and it expresses—as it were by

[1] By a strange irony of fate, this tune, which the revolutionaries have made their own, was originally an official tune, composed probably by some obscure military bandmaster, and played at the funerals of officers and high officials.

accident—the commonplaceness of all that is determined and unflinching, mingled with an accent of weary pathos. As it grew dark torches were brought out, lighting up the red banners and the scarlet coffin of the unknown veterinary surgeon, who in a second, by a strange freak of chance, had become a hero, or rather a symbol, an emblem and a banner, and who was being carried to his last resting place with a simplicity which eclipsed the pomp of all royal funerals, and to the sound of a low song of tired but indefatigable sadness stronger and more formidable than the pæans which celebrate the triumphs and the pageants of kings.

The impression left on my mind by this funeral is deep. As I saw these hundred thousand men march past so quietly, so simply, in their bourgeois clothes, singing in careless, almost conversational fashion, I seemed nevertheless to hear the "tramping of innumerable armies," and to feel the breath of the

> "Courage never to submit or yield,
> And what is else not to be overcome."

It is impossible for the Government or for any one else to accuse these people of displaying a provoking attitude, of badgering or insulting the soldiers or the authorities, or of not being able to keep order among themselves.

November 3rd.

Last night, after Bauman's funeral, which passed off without an incident, at eleven o'clock a number of students and doctors were shot in front of the university, as they were on their way home, by Cossacks, who were stationed

in the Riding School, opposite the university. The Cossacks fired without orders. They were incensed, as many of the troops were, by the display of red flags, and they disliked processions.

November 6th..

The last three days have been days of curious disorder and anarchy. I will try and note briefly what has been taking place.

The day after Bauman's funeral (November 3rd) was the anniversary of the Emperor's accession, and all the "hooligans" of the city, who are now called the "Black Gang," used the opportunity to make counter demonstrations under the ægis of the National flag. The students did nothing, they were in no way aggressive; but the hooligans when they came across a student beat him and in many cases killed him. The police did nothing; they seemed to have disappeared. These hooligans paraded the town in small groups, sometimes uniting, blocking the traffic, demanding money from well-dressed people, killing students, and making themselves generally objectionable. When the police were appealed to they shrugged their shoulders and said: "Liberty." The hooligans demanded the release of the man who had killed Bauman. "They have set free so many of their men," they said, referring to the revolutionaries, "we want our man set free." Practically the town was in a state of anarchy; anybody could kill any one else with impunity. In one of the biggest streets a hooligan came up to a man and asked him for money; he gave him ten kopecks. "Is that all?" said the hooligan, "Take that," and he killed him with a Finnish knife. I was myself stopped by a band on the

Twerskaia and asked politely to contribute to their fund, the fund of the "Black Gang," which I did with considerable alacrity. However, students, or those whom they considered to be students in disguise, were the people they mostly attacked. The citizens of the town in general soon began to think that this state of things was intolerable, and vigorous representations were made to the town Duma that some steps should be taken to put an end to it. The hooligans broke the windows of the Hôtel Métropole and those of several shops. There was a general impression among them that liberty meant doing as much damage as they pleased. This state of things lasted three days, and now it has been stopped—utterly and completely stopped. A notice is published forbidding all demonstrations in the streets with flags. The police have reappeared, and everything has resumed its normal course. These bands of hooligans were small and exceedingly easy to deal with. The disorders were completely unnecessary. But they have done some good in one way; they have brought home to everybody the necessity for order and the maintenance of order, and the conviction that if the police are removed the result will be anarchy. However, considering the state of lawlessness that existed, it is remarkable how little damage was done.

The night before last, as I was walking back to the hotel after dinner, I met two omnibuses full of wounded students being driven to the hospital. One student was torn to pieces by a hooligan crowd yesterday afternoon; and a friend of mine from the windows of the Hôtel National saw another trampled to death.

The general tenour of opinion among the Liberals is that the Government must prove their good intentions by deeds and not by words, and that soothing Manifestoes are of no use now. There are three points on which they insist. First, they demand that the partial amnesty should be made complete; that there should be an amnesty for all political offenders without exception. Secondly, they say that they have no guarantee for the new reforms, because the Ministers are taken from the Bureaucracy. They demand new Ministers taken from the Zemstva. Thirdly, they demand the resignation of General Trepoff. With regard to the first point it would be a wise step on the part of the Government to satisfy the Liberals. The concessions will probably be made gradually, and I suppose their maxim is not to give too much at once or the demands will increase. It is a pity, if the Government have decided to give in on this point, that they did not do so at once. Every concession seems, as it is, to have been extorted by force. That is the general impression of the Liberals: "We have been given nothing; everything we have obtained we have extorted by force." With regard to the resignation of General Trepoff, if I were a Russian and guarantees were given that the police were no longer going to interfere with individuals, and that the secret police force was to be abolished—and I believe this is being done—I should make a demonstration for the retention of General Trepoff. If there are to be police at all to keep order, somebody must manage them. The Russian police are a hopelessly incompetent body, and General Trepoff is a thoroughly

competent man. He may have used too heavy a hand sometimes, and I can understand the people being indignant that he should rule Russia like a dictator. On the other hand he knows how to keep order; he knows how to manage the police, and if the liberty of individuals is respected—and, so far, since the publication of the Manifesto it has been—I cannot see why any one should desire his retirement. However, the discussion of this point is futile. General Trepoff has become a symbol, like General Galliffet in France after the Commune. To the ordinary Russian Liberal he represents the Bureaucracy and all the evils of the old régime, and nothing can change that impression. His position is probably untenable, and he will be forced to resign, though, as far as liberty is concerned, at present the people do exactly what they like in the way of political meetings, the newspapers write what they please, and the prisons at Moscow and St. Petersburg have been partially emptied of their political prisoners. The Russians have, in fact, got the two boons which Matthew Arnold said were so dearly cherished by the English middle-class—liberty to make fools of themselves, and publicity to show the world how they are doing it. The extreme revolutionary party wish to do away with the Emperor altogether and to have a Republic. If this is done some people say there will be a civil war in every town and village in the Russian Empire. As it is, half the people do not understand what a Constitution means. A soldier, for instance, asked whether it meant that the Emperor had resigned; and some of the educated class understand it still less.

Altogether the Liberals seem to me to be in too great a hurry; nevertheless things are apparently calming down. The question is—Will Count Witte between now and then succeed in thoroughly gaining the confidence of the Liberals and of the representatives of the Zemtsva? If he succeeds all will be well. The extreme Conservative Party, represented by the *Moskovski Viedomosti*, is really of no practical account. Its point of view was admirably represented by the hall porter of one of the old and conservative families at Moscow, who on the day of the publication of the Manifesto said: "The Emperor has deserted us."

CHAPTER V

ST. PETERSBURG BEFORE THE SECOND STRIKE

ST. PETERSBURG, *November 9th.*

I ARRIVED here this morning from Moscow. The chief piece of news which is being discussed is the dismissal of Trepoff. Of Trepoff one always hears contradictory accounts: some people saying he is an inveterate reactionary, a Jew-baiter, &c.; others that he is a man of great common sense, liberal in policy as far as this is compatible with common sense, and never afraid of speaking his mind. I heard from people who ought to know that he was strongly in favour of the granting of the Manifesto of October 17th. What aroused the general hatred against him was his "order for the day" telling the soldiers not to spare cartridges, should there be disorders. I met him once here before the war broke out. I thought he seemed a sensible, strong-willed person. When he was Chief of the Police at Moscow he had the reputation of being sensible, of keeping order well, of being rather heavy-handed, and of committing foolish *gaffes* from time to time. I am certain he is neither the monster he is made out by the Liberal press here and abroad, nor yet the Crom-

wellian genius other people would have us believe him to be. I expect that his strength lies in the fact that he does not mind saying what he thinks. In St. Petersburg this quality is so rare that people who possess it appear to be geniuses.

November 12th.

I went this afternoon to hear a performance of Beethoven's "Fidelio." I don't think the young lions in the gallery realised that this opera was the complete expression of the "Liberation movement" in Germany!

The number of hooligans who now infest the streets is great. A story is circulating of a hooligan who stopped a man and demanded his watch. He gave it. The hooligan then asked for his coat. He gave it also, the hooligan giving him his own coat in exchange. When the man who had been robbed got home he found his own watch and 170 roubles in the pocket of the hooligan's coat.

November 14th.

The official declaration of the postponement of the Polish constitutional liberties is causing a good deal of talk and excitement.

One point with regard to Poland which people sometimes overlook is that there are Poles in Germany; Poles in the North of Germany besides those in German Poland; and moreover a great many Poles. German Poland also is an important factor in itself. The situation therefore is analogous to what would happen if Ireland were a country shared between

France and England, and if England had been at war with Germany or any Power, just as Russia has been at war with Japan, and if while that war lasted France had promised to cause no trouble on our Irish frontier. Whether the German Emperor made any definite promise not to interfere on the Polish frontier during the Japanese War it is impossible to say; what at all events is certain is that an independent Poland would not be viewed favourably in Germany, because it would tend to produce an independent German Poland and a discontented and rebellious Polish population in North Germany. One has only to read Bismarck's Memoirs to see that one of the keynotes of his policy was a friendship with Russia based on common interests and action with regard to Poland. It is unlikely that the German Emperor has departed from this traditional policy. However that may be, at this moment the situation in Poland, the prolonged strike which has continued steadily long after the strikes have ceased in other parts of Russia, calls for some immediate action. Two courses were open to the Government: either to grant autonomy at once or to enforce order by martial law. There is a rumour current here that the German Emperor, who would, as has already been explained, be strongly opposed to anything like Polish autonomy, had come to an agreement with the Russian Emperor on this point. The Russian newspapers to-day say that German troops are being moved to the frontier. In any case we are face to face with the fact that martial law has been proclaimed in Poland; and any senti-

mental sympathy with the Poles which one might feel is counteracted by the fact that had they only waited until the Duma or the Constituent Assembly met in Russia they would probably have got autonomy without any trouble. Whether the enforcement of martial law in Poland is a wise measure or not is another question; but it is one of two necessary courses.

The fact is that the Poles, like the Liberals here, are in a great hurry. They wish everything to be done at once, and changes which have taken some centuries to elaborate in other and calmer countries to be brought about here in a few days. The Liberals are now crying loudly that nothing will satisfy them but a Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage. They are unwilling to wait a few months until order can be restored, and until the Duma can meet and vote on the adoption or the non-adoption of such an assembly. They wish it to come straight into existence, like Pallas from the brain of Zeus. All that is written in the Liberal papers here must not be taken as an absolutely impartial and dispassionate record of facts. A well-informed, sensible, and Liberal Russian told me yesterday that some of these papers—and among them not the most Radical, some of which, he said, were managed by sincere and able men—were merely for opposition for the sake of opposition, and that whatever Count Witte said or did they would say it was wrong; some of them act the part of deliberate inciters and wish merely to add fuel to the general excitement. I am not of course alluding to Liberal newspapers which have an old-established

and solid reputation such as the *Russkie. Viedomosti* of Moscow. There is a newspaper here which was especially violent in insisting on the fact that not only General Trepoff but also all the military should be removed from the town; these violent articles did not prevent them from sending privately to General Trepoff to ask for a squadron of Cossacks to protect their office, begging at the same time that this request might be kept secret.

The "Intellectuals" of Russia have many qualities, but everything they say must not be taken as being irrefutable; they are human, like the rest of us. They are less practical than some of us, even if we do not agree with a well-known French manager of a *café* here, who said: "Les Intelligents!" (with a snort of disgust). "Ce sont les intelligents les plus bêtes que j'aie jamais vus." What one is hearing constantly said by sensible people is that before any political theory or system is carried into effect order must be restored; that the reforms which have been granted cannot be carried out in detail in a day; that there is one man capable of carrying these reforms out, and that he is Count Witte; that to oppose Count Witte for the sake of opposition is merely criminal, because if Count Witte throws up the sponge the game will be lost and the result will be universal anarchy, the only remedy for which will be universal and drastic repression. The trouble is that Count Witte is a man of business, and no one else in Russia is. It seems to me that the Liberals by their action are in danger of creating a party of reaction. For the so-called "reactionary party" did not up to the present

moment exist. That is to say, there was practically nobody of any importance who wished to revert to the state of things before the granting of the Constitution. On the other hand, there are a great many people who think that the maintenance of order is all important.

The opponents of the Government, however, say that it is making for disorder, and point to the massacres of the Jews in the provinces. The Kronstadt mutiny is said not to have been political; nevertheless if the sailors had not got drunk, nothing could have prevented their blowing Peterhof to bits. A universal strike is threatened immediately.

November 17th.

Last night, while I was at the Opéra Bouffe, where the "Country Girl" was being given, the electric light went out. The performance continued all the same; the actors holding bedroom candles in their hands, while the auditorium remained in the dimmest of twilights. This is owing to the strike.

November 21st.

I started for London.

CHAPTER VI

MOSCOW—THE DECEMBER RISING

MOSCOW, *December 12th.*

WHEN one is in England it is very difficult to form an idea of what is taking place in Russia, and this is not owing to the absence but to the superabundance of news concerning Russian events. One cannot see the wood for the trees. In Russia there is also a superabundance of news and of rumours; but merely by walking about in the streets one is brought face to face with certain facts, enabling one to check the news to some extent. I have been in Russia a week, at St. Petersburg, and I arrived here yesterday. In St. Petersburg the impression that a stranger receives on arriving is that everything is going on exactly the same as usual. The streets are crowded, the shops are all open, and there is nothing to show that the country is in a state of revolution.

The postal strike was over in St. Petersburg when I arrived, and it is now over here, although, owing to the dislocation and the arrears, the postal service is at this moment almost imperceptible.

With regard to political matters, the main impression

one receives is that the revolutionary party is admirably organised, and although there are dissensions among it —as, for instance, between the Social-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats—they are willing if not ready to coalesce at any given moment against the Government, whereas the body of people who do not side with the revolutionaries are split up into various groups, differing on some of the most important points of policy. Perhaps the most important of these groups is the Constitutional Democratic Party, which is in favour of universal suffrage and a National Assembly.

Especially remarkable are the various shapes taken by the criticism directed against Count Witte by the various parties. Roughly speaking, this criticism may be divided into three heads:

1. The revolutionaries (including the Constitutional Democrats) say that Count Witte is a Bureaucrat; that nothing good can come of him, and that he and his *régime* must go.

2. The Moderates—I call them Moderates for want of a better word—say that Count Witte has not proved himself to be equal to his task; that since the publication of the Manifesto he has not formulated a single law save an ineffectual one with regard to the Press.

3. The reactionary Nationalists say that Count Witte is a traitor, that he has been bought by the Jews and is playing for a Republic. There is a sentence of Napoleon's which perhaps may occur to Count Witte under the present circumstances: "Un homme d'état est-il fait pour être sensible? N'est-ce pas un personnage complètement excentrique, toujours

seul d'un côté, avec le monde de l'autre?" Count Witte is at this moment completely "excentric." If he succeeds—and by succeeding I mean remaining in power until the Duma meets—his triumph will be great. To give some idea of the atmosphere which we vaguely call public opinion, I will quote some of the *obiter dicta* I have heard since I have been here. That Count Witte is a cunning old fox, worse than Plehve. That Count Witte is not what he was; that he is merely incapable of executing what he undertook. That Count Witte is the most far-seeing man in Russia; that he centralised Russia in order to lead to a revolution, and thus make radical changes easier; that he placed the railways in the hands of the State and created the spirit monopoly in order to have no private interests to deal with when the crash should come. That Count Witte is a Radical of the type of Robespierre, and will only declare himself to be on the side of popular representation when the upper classes are entirely destroyed.

That the Government is too weak, and that it all comes from having been too weak from the first and from not having hanged the Kronstadt mutineers. That the Government was too reactionary from the first, and that it destroyed the confidence of the people by establishing martial law in Poland directly after the Manifesto. That the *régime* of Plehve was better than the present state of anarchy. That the present *régime* is more reactionary than the system of Plehve. That with a Government as revolutionary as the existing one nothing good can be expected; that the Constitution should be withdrawn, the Emperor should be deposed

and another appointed, and that Count Witte should be hanged. That the Government has not been explicit enough; that a programme including two Legislative Chambers—an Upper and Lower Chamber—should be published and sworn to by the Emperor, and that the utmost severity should be employed, after that, in case of necessity. That no Government at all is necessary in Russia; only a *Bund*, a Council of Empire, which should meet once a year and manage the railways; that the Army should be disbanded and the country entirely decentralised. That a Dictator should be appointed at once, and 10,000 "intellectuals" arrested.

That the revolutionaries merely want to destroy any form of government as an act of revenge; that they are as the Irish, "agin the Government"; that this act of revenge is not surprising, considering they are smarting under the monstrous wrong which has been done them for years, *i.e.*, misgovernment carried to the extreme. That nothing can possibly restore peace to Russia except universal suffrage, and that Russia being by nature more democratic than other European countries need not feel herself bound to follow their example, but must proceed straight to universal suffrage. That the Emperor should go to Moscow. That if the Emperor goes to Moscow it would excite the peasants to kill the middle and upper classes. That this would be a bad thing. That this would be a good thing. That if the Emperor goes to Moscow he will be killed. That it is nonsense to think the Emperor would be killed at Moscow; that his position cannot be worse than it is, but might be improved by such a step. That the Kremlin would be a safer residence than the Tsarskoe

Selo. That the Emperor must take an oath to the Constitution, and give guarantees that it will not be withdrawn. That the Emperor should put himself at the head of the peasants and the Army and snap his fingers at the Socialists and the landlords and give the peasants the land.

All these opinions I have heard from Russians since I have been here. In St. Petersburg considerable anxiety was felt as to what would happen in Moscow on the occasion of the Emperor's birthday (to-day), since the reactionary party—the "Alliance of Russian People"—had requested and been allowed to organise a demonstration opposite the Kremlin. These fears, however, proved groundless. I was present at the demonstration. The holy banners were carried in procession from the Kremlin to the public place outside the Kremlin walls, where a service was held. The procession then returned into the Kremlin at twelve o'clock. There was a small crowd looking on, and one man (a butcher) made a speech, saying that the Emperor had been terrorised into giving a Constitution, but that he would be requested to take it back again. The crowd cheered, and one policeman repeated five times that the speaker was a fine fellow. The crowd then marched in procession to the Governor-General's house, and Admiral Dubassoff spoke to the crowd. This crowd was a ridiculously small one; it dispersed at noon. The population of Moscow was conspicuous by its absence.

A great deal is talked at present about the doings of the hooligans in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In St. Petersburg the number of beggars in the street is

remarkable; here the doings of the hooligans are said to take place mostly at night. One hears on all sides that the state of things is impossible and that the streets are unsafe, yet they are crowded with people all day long. . . There appears also to be some danger from the reckless way in which the population toy with "Browning" pistols in self-defence, but except for this and the hooligans there is no kind of danger for foreigners here.

The state of the Army here has caused the Government a good deal of alarm. The mutiny in the Rostov Regiment came to an abrupt end yesterday, and to-day news has arrived of a manifesto granting the soldiers extra pay, extra meat, and soap. The discontent among the soldiers and sailors has been up to now in every case economical and not political, therefore it is thought that if the economical demands are satisfied the discontent will disappear. It will be well for the Government if it does, for in the long run the ultimate issue of the conflict must depend on the Army, and the symptoms which have declared themselves up to now are not reassuring. It is quite possible, however, that the soap and the blankets which are to be given to the men may allay their political restlessness. The Cavalry is said to have been all along thoroughly reliable.

MOSCOW, *December 28th.*

Wednesday, the 20th of December, punctually at midday the strike began in Moscow. The lift ceased working in the hotel, the electric light was turned off and I laid in a large store of books and cigarettes against coming events. The strike was said to be an

answer to the summary proceedings of the Government and its action in arresting leaders of the revolutionary committee, &c., and its watchword was to be: "A Constituent Assembly based upon universal suffrage." Beyond the electric light going out nothing happened on this day. On Thursday, the 21st, most of the shops began to shut. The man who cleaned the boots in the hotel made the following remark: "I now understand that the people enjoy great power." I heard a shot fired somewhere from the hotel at nine o'clock in the evening. I asked the hall porter whether the theatres were open. He said they were shut, and added: "And who would dream of going to the theatre in these times of stress?"

The next day I drove with a friend into the country to a village called Chernaia, about 25 versts from Moscow on the Novgorod road, which before the days of railways was famous for its highway robberies and assaults on the rich merchants by the hooligans of that day. We drove in a big wooden sledge drawn by two horses, the coachman standing up all the while. We went to visit two old maids, who were peasants and lived in the village. One of them had got stranded in Moscow, and owing to the railway strike was unable to go back again and so we took her with us, otherwise she would have walked home. We started at 10.30 and arrived at 1.30. The road was absolutely still—a thick carpet of snow, upon which fresh flakes drifting in the fitful gusts of wind fell gently. Looking at the drifting flakes which seemed to be tossed about in the air, the first old maid said that a man's life was like a snowflake in the wind, and that she had never thought she would go home with us on her sister's name-day.

When we arrived at the village we found a meal ready for us, which, although the fast of Advent was being strictly observed and the food made with fasting-butter, was far from jejune. It consisted of pies with rice and cabbage inside, and cold fish and tea and jam, and some vodka for me—the guest. The cottage consisted of one room and two very small ante-rooms—the walls, floors, and ceilings of plain deal. Five or six rich ikons hung in the corner of the room, and a coloured oleograph of Father John of Kronstadt on one of the walls. A large stove heated the room. Soon some guests arrived to congratulate old maid No. 2 on her name-day, and after a time the pope entered, blessed the room, and sat down to tea. We talked of the strike and how quiet the country was and of the hooligans in the town. "No," said the pope with gravity, "we have our own hooligans." A little later the village schoolmaster arrived, who looked about twenty years old, and was a little tiny man with a fresh face and gold-rimmed spectacles, with his wife, who, like the æsthetic lady in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience," was "massive." I asked the pope if I could live unmolested in this village. He said, "Yes, but if you want to work you won't be quiet in this house, because your two hostesses chatter and drink tea all day and all night." At three o'clock we thought we had better be starting home; it was getting dark, the snow was falling heavily. The old maids said we couldn't possibly go. We should (1) lose our way, (2) be robbed by tramps, (3) be massacred by strikers on the railway line, (4) not be allowed to enter the town, (5) be attacked by hooligans when we reached the dark streets. We sent for Vassili, the coachman, to

consult with him. "Can you find your way home?" we asked. "Yes, I can," he said. "Shall we lose our way?" "We might lose our way—it happens," he said slowly, "it happens times and again; but we might not —it often doesn't happen." "Might we be attacked on the way?" "We might—it happens—they attack; but we might not—sometimes they don't attack." "Are the horses tired?" "Yes, the horses are tired." "Then we had better not go." "The horses can go all right," he said. Then we thought we would stay; but Vassili said that his master would curse him if he stayed unless we "added" something.

So we settled to stay, and the schoolmaster took us to see the village school, which was clean, roomy, and altogether an excellent home of learning. Then he took us to a neighbouring factory which had not struck, and in which he presided over a night class for working men and women. From here we telephoned to Moscow and learned that everything was quiet in the city. I talked to one of the men in the factory about the strike. "It's all very well for the young men," one said, "they are hot-headed and like striking; but we— we have to starve for a month. That's what it means." Then we went to the school neighbouring the factory where the night class was held. There were two rooms, one for men presided over by the schoolmaster and one for women presided over by his wife. They had a lesson of two hours in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The men came to be taught in separate batches; one batch coming one week, one another. This day there were five men and two boys and six women. The men were reading a story about a bear—

rather a tedious tale. "Yes, we are reading," one of them said to me, "and we understand some of it." That was, at any rate, consoling. They read to themselves first, then aloud in turn, standing up, and then they were asked to tell what they had read in their own words. They read haltingly, with difficulty grasping familiar words. They related fluently, except one man, who said he could remember nothing whatsoever about the doings of the bear. One little boy was doing with lightning rapidity those kind of sums which, by giving you too many data and not enough—a superabundance of detail, leaving out the all that appears so imperatively necessary—seem to some minds peculiarly insoluble. The sum in question stated that a factory consisted of 770 hands—men, women, and children, and that the men received half as much again as the women, &c. That particular proportion of wages seems to exist in the arithmetic books of all countries to the despair of the non-mathematical, and the little boy insisted on my following every step of his process of reckoning; but not even he with the wisdom and sympathy of babes succeeded in teaching me how to do that kind of sum. He afterwards wrote in a copybook pages of declensions of Russian nouns and adjectives. Here I found I could help him and I saved him some trouble by dictating them to him; though every now and then we had some slight doubt and discussion about the genitive plural. In the woman's class, one girl explained to us, with tears in her eyes, how difficult it was for her to attend this class. Her fellow-workers laughed at her for it, and at home they told her that a woman's place was to be at work and

not to meddle with books. Those who attend this school show that they are really anxious to learn, as the effort and self-sacrifice needed are great.

We stayed till the end of the lesson and then we went home, where an excellent supper of eggs, &c., was awaiting us. We found the two old maids and their first cousin, who told us she was about to go to law for a legacy of 100,000 roubles which had been left her, but which was disputed by a more distant relation on the mother's side. We talked of law suits and politics and miracles, and real and false faith-healers, till bedtime came. A bed was made for me alongside of the stove. Made is the right word, for it was literally built up before my eyes. A sleeping place was also made for the coachman on the floor of the small ante-room; then the rest of the company disappeared to sleep. I say disappeared, because I literally do not know where in this small interior there was room for them to sleep. They consisted of the two old maids, their niece and her little girl, aged three, and another little girl, aged seven. My travelling companion slept in the room, but the rest disappeared, I suppose on the top of the stove, only it seemed to reach the ceiling; somewhere they were, for the little girl, excited by the events of the day, sang snatches of song till a late hour in the night. The next morning, after I got up, the room was transformed from a bed-room into a dining-room and aired, breakfast was served, and at ten we started back again in the snow to Moscow.

On the 23rd we arrived in the town at one o'clock. The streets of the suburbs seemed to be unusually still. My companion said to me: "How quiet the streets are,

but it seems to me an uncanny, evil quietness." My companion lived in the Lobkovski Pereoolok, and I had the day before sent my things from the hotel to an apartment in the adjoining street, the Mwilnikov. When we arrived at the entrance of these streets we found them blocked by a crowd and guarded by police and dragoons. We got through the other end of the streets, and we were told that the night before Fielder's School, which is a large building at the corner of these two streets, had been the scene of a revolutionary meeting; that the revolutionaries had been surrounded in this house, had refused to surrender, had thrown a bomb at an officer and killed him, had been fired at by artillery, and had finally surrendered after killing one officer and five men, with 17 casualties—15 wounded and two killed. All this had happened in my very street during my absence. An hour later we again heard a noise of guns, and the armed rising (of which some of the leaders, who were to have seized the Governor-General of the town and set up a provisional Government, had been arrested the night before in my street) had nevertheless broken out in all parts of the town. A little later I saw a crowd of people on foot and in sledges flying in panic down the street shouting "Kazaki!" I heard and saw nothing else of any interest during the day. There were crowds of people in the streets till nightfall.

On Sunday, Christmas Eve, I drove to the hotel in the centre of Moscow to see a friend. The aspect of the town was extraordinary. The streets were full of people—*flâneurs* who were either walking about or gathered together in small and large groups at the street

corners. Distant, and sometimes quite near, sounds of firing were audible, and nobody seemed to care a scrap; they were everywhere talking, discussing, and laughing. Imagine the difference between this and the scenes described in Paris during the street fighting in '32, '48, and '71.

People went about their business just as usual. If there was a barricade they drove round it. The cabmen never dreamt of not going anywhere, although one said to me that it was very frightening. Moreover, an insuperable curiosity seemed to lead them to go and look where things were happening. Several were killed in this way. On the other hand, at the slightest approach of troops they ran in panic like hares, although the troops do not do the passers-by any mischief. Two or three times I have been walking in the streets when dragoons galloped past, and come to no harm. We heard shots all the time, and met the same groups of people and passed two barricades. The barricades are mostly not like those of the Faubourg St. Antoine, but small impediments made of branches and an overturned sledge; they are put there to annoy and wear out the troops and not to stand siege. The method of warfare that the revolutionaries have adopted is a guerilla warfare of the streets. They fire or throw bombs and rapidly disperse; they have made some attempts to seize the Nikolaiev Railway Station, but have in all cases been repulsed. The attitude of the man in the street is curious: sometimes he is indignant with the strikers, sometimes indignant with the Government. If you ask a person of revolutionary sympathies he will tell you

that sympathy is entirely with the revolution; if you ask a person of moderate principles he will tell you that the "people" are indignant with the strikers; but the attitude of the average man in the street seems to me one of sceptical indifference in spite of all, in spite of trade ceasing, houses being fired at, and the hospitals being full to overflowing of dead and wounded. The fact is that disorders have lost their first power of creating an impression; they have become everyday occurrences.

Here are various remarks I heard. One man, a commissionaire, asked whether I thought it was right to fire on the revolutionaries. I hesitated, gathering my thoughts to explain that I thought that they thoroughly deserved it since they began it, but that the Government nevertheless had brought it about by their dilatoriness. (This is exactly what I think.) Misunderstanding my hesitation, he said: "Surely you, a *foreigner*, need not mind saying what you think, and you know it is wrong." (This was curious, because these people, commissionaires, porters, &c., are often reactionary.) A cabman said to me: "Who do you think will get the best of it?" I said, "I don't know, what do you think?" "Nothing will come of it," he said. "There will still be rich people like you and poor people like me, and whether the Government is in the hands of the *chinovniks* or the students is all one and the same." Another man, a porter, an ex-soldier, said it was awful. You couldn't go anywhere or drive anywhere without risking being killed. Soldiers came back from the war and were killed in the streets. A bullet came, and then the man was done for. Another man, a kind of railway

employee, said that the Russians had no stamina, that the Poles would never give in, but the Russians would directly. Another man, fond of paradox, said to me that he hoped all the fanatics would be shot, and that then the Government would be upset. A policeman was guarding the street which led to the hotel. I asked if I could pass. "How could I not let a Barine with whom I am acquainted pass?" he said. Then a baker's boy came up with a tray of rolls on his head, also asking to pass—to go to the hotel. After some discussion the policeman let him go, but suddenly said, "Or are you a rascal?" Then I asked him what he thought of it all. He said: "We fire as little as possible. They are fools." The fact is that among the wealthier and educated classes the feeling is either one of intense sympathy or violent indignation with the revolutionaries; among the lower classes it is a feeling of sceptical resignation or indifference. "Things are bad—nothing will come of it for us."

Christmas Day.

At midnight the windows of our house had been rattled by the firing of guns somewhere near; but on Christmas morning (this is not the Russian Christmas) one was able to get about. I drove down one of the principal streets, the Kouznetski Most, into another large street, the Neglinii Proiesd (as if it were down Bond Street into Piccadilly), when suddenly in a flash all the cabs began to drive fast up the street. My cab went on. He was inquisitive. We saw nothing. He shouted to another cab, asking him what was the matter. No answer. We went a little further down, when along the

Neglinii Proiesd we saw a patrol and guns advancing. "Go back," shouted one of the soldiers, waving his rifle—and away we went. Later, I believe there was firing there. Further along we met more patrols and ambulances. The shops are not only shut but boarded up.

Next day I walked to the Nikolaiev Station in the afternoon. It is from here that the trains go to St. Petersburg; the trains are running now, but how the passengers start I don't know, for it was impossible to get near the station. Cabs were galloping away from it, and the square in front of it had been cleared by Cossacks. I think it was attacked this afternoon. I walked into the Riansh Station, which was next door. It was a scene of desolation: empty trains, stacked-up luggage, third-class passengers encamped in the waiting-room. There was a perpetual noise of firing. Practically the town is under martial law. Nobody is allowed to be out of doors after nine o'clock under penalty of three months' imprisonment or 3,000 roubles fine. Householders have been made responsible for people firing out of their windows. The idea of collective responsibility is a shock to some Russians. During the last twenty years the system has led, through the perpetual shifting of responsibility, to the annihilation of responsibility; and this in its turn has produced a revolution of irresponsibility. Some people talk as if the revolution were an evil element which had sprung from hell without any cause, a sudden visitation like the plague, as if it were not the absolutely logical and inevitable result of the particular form of bad government which has obtained in Russia during the last twenty

years. These people pass a sponge over this fact. They say to people of liberal ideas: "You have brought this about," then, asked if they are in favour of the Constitution, assent; which should prove them to be opportunists. They do not like being called opportunists.

This morning, December 27th, there is considerable movement and traffic in the streets; the small shops are open, and the tobacconists. News has come from St. Petersburg of the Electorate Law. The question is now whether it will satisfy the people. Firing is still going on; they say a factory is being attacked. The troops who were supposed to be disaffected have proved absolutely loyal. The one way to make them loyal was to throw bombs at them. The policemen are now armed with rifles and bayonets. I asked an educated man this afternoon if he thought the Electorate Law would satisfy people. He said he thought not. He said that the people demanded a far wider suffrage law. "Are you in favour yourself of universal suffrage?" I asked. "No," he answered; "but when I see that the whole people demand it, I submit to the majority. The Government has as yet *given* nothing; everything has been torn from it, and more will have to be torn from it." One learns here at any rate not to generalise and not to prophesy. A cabman said this afternoon: "There is an illness abroad, we are sick, it will pass—but God remains." I agree with him.

I do not believe that it is a case of bricks falling out of a wall until the wall falls down, but of a young tree shedding bark. The illness, however, is a severe one, and it is idle to blame the patient for the violence of his

symptoms and the doctor for the inadequacy of his remedies. The people to blame are those who made the patient ill by feeding him on poison. And some of these have already met with their just reward.

CHAPTER VII

MOSCOW AFTER THE RISING

MOSCOW, *January* 1, 1906.

IF it is difficult—and it seems to be difficult to the verge of impossibility—for the historian of the present day to write impartially about political movements which happened in the days of Queen Elizabeth and of Mary Queen of Scots, how infinitely more difficult must it be to arrive at an impartial view of events when one is oneself in the centre of them and living among the actors who are contributing to what is afterwards called history! The historian solves the question by frankly affiliating himself to one side (like Froude or Macaulay or Taine), and he is probably right in doing this; I notice, also, that our most eminent correspondents do the same. Therefore I confess at once that I am in no way free from prejudices, and I make no pretence of invincible impartiality; only I have seen and heard enough of both sides to learn one thing—that the two parties who are now engaged in strife in Russia are both right or both wrong. I will try to the best of my ability to stifle my own feelings, and, like a piece of blotting-paper which absorbs red or black ink

indiscriminately, try to reproduce as best I can fragments of what I absorb.

The strike is over, although I believe some revolutionaries are still holding out in a factory near the Zoological Gardens. The shops are open, the electric light is shining on the hard, snowy, ice-cold streets, and life is going on, in the Russian expression, in its old rut. I suppose the first question which will present itself to people abroad anxious for information is: What did it all amount to? The second question: What is the result of it? The third is possibly: What do the people in Moscow, the inhabitant, the man in the street, think of it? Practically, it did not amount to very much; a general strike was proclaimed which was to take place all over Russia with the object of obtaining universal suffrage. The strike was not universal. It was closely followed by an armed rising of the revolutionary party in Moscow with the object of arresting the Governor-General and establishing a temporary Government. It resulted in complete and utter failure; and this seems to point to one of two things: either that the revolutionary party is less well organised than we supposed it to be, or that it wrongly gauged popular feeling and no longer found such strong support in public opinion as it did before. If it be judged by its recent action it cannot be said to have given proof of any good organisation, since it was obviously a mistake to foment a movement among the military—using economic needs and demands as a weapon—a week before the strike began. The economic demands were made by the soldiers, and satisfied immediately, and their mutiny ceased. It is

nonsense to pretend that the soldiers have any revolutionary tendencies, and the revolutionaries made a great mistake in trying to undermine their belief in the Emperor. The same thing holds good as regards the peasants; and only yesterday a person with ultra-Radical convictions said to me: "The peasant, if he is hungry, can easily be made to loot and burn; but if he is replete he will send anybody who talks politics to him to the devil, and if any one attacks the Emperor before him he will tear him to pieces; possibly in twenty or thirty years things will be different and he will be an enlightened man; at present he is not, and there is no use in not facing the fact. The revolutionaries have made a cardinal error in attacking the peasants' and the soldiers' only ideal—call it ideal, idol, or what you like." Therefore I say that in this case the behaviour of the revolutionaries showed neither insight nor statesmanship nor good organisation. It is possible, of course, that the strike may have been brought about, as I wrote before, by the workmen forcing the leaders' hands, being unwilling to starve for a month but ready to rise in arms and fight for several days.

Now, as to what actually happened. With regard to the loss of life most people seem to be agreed in thinking that neither the revolutionaries nor the soldiers suffered very great losses, but that nine-tenths of the people killed were the onlookers among the public. Sometimes, of course, it was their own fault; sometimes it was not. When firing was going on it was as a rule difficult to get anywhere near it because the police warned you "off the course." But then one must take into account that the streets in

which the firing happened were inhabited, and that sometimes the unfortunate inhabitants were shot through no fault of their own. I think it is quite evident that there was a great deal of entirely unnecessary and absolutely futile bombarding of private houses. No doubt the revolutionaries fired from such houses; but they fired and went away, and then the house was battered and the revolutionaries were not caught. It must not be thought that Moscow is a heap of cinders as in 1812. For the most part the actual traces of bombardment are slight. The damage done to Fielder's School, for instance, which is in my street, amounts to this: that the windows are broken and there is one hole in the wall. On the other hand, several houses have been entirely destroyed, and the printing offices of the *Russkoe Slovo* and some factories burnt—it is difficult to ascertain by which side, but possibly by both. This afternoon I went to a hospital to see some wounded soldiers, and in one of the wards the windows had been shattered by a bullet which had lodged in the cornice. Nothing will prevent me from believing that it must be possible to ascertain whether you are firing at a hospital, which is in one of the big streets of the town, or not. The complaints of the inhabitants are universal. Some blame the soldiers and some blame the revolutionaries, and one hears bitter stories from both parties about the conduct of their adversaries. Those on the Government side say: "What can you do against guerilla bands who dart round corners, shoot policemen, and run away?" The others say: "What can you think of people who shoot down the Red Cross doctors and bombard private houses?" Again, the supporters of the Government

say the revolutionaries use and exploit the Red Cross and, under the guise of Red Cross men, do murder. The others say again "The Government hires a Militia drawn from the Black Hundred to shoot indiscriminately from the tops of church steeples." Again you hear a story like this (I do not vouch for its truth): A student was surrounded by a mob, and on the point of being lynched, when he was rescued by a policeman, and on the way to the police station he shot the policeman. Or you hear that a number of peaceable citizens were walking up a street when the soldiery suddenly appeared and fired up the street indiscriminately. It must be borne in mind that the people of Moscow had been fully warned to stay at home as much as possible, that after six o'clock it was dangerous to go out, and that groups of three or more people would be fired on at sight, since the revolutionaries, who wear no uniform and are indistinguishable from the ordinary passer-by, took shelter among such groups. A man in a fur coat may, for all you know, have his pockets full of bombs. I know three cases of people being accidentally killed: a little boy ran out of his house, not into the street, but into the yard of his house to make a slide. As he did so he was shot by a stray bullet. The proprietor of the Ermitage Restaurant was also shot on his doorstep by a stray bullet. Thirdly, Metrofan, a kind of porter who was a friend of mine, and about whom I wrote in my last letter, has disappeared, and is not to be found in any of the hospitals. He was the man—an ex-soldier—who said that it was impossible to walk about safely (I laughed at him as he said it), and if he has been killed—which I trust is not true—he seems to

have had the clearest presentiment of his fate. He was sent with a letter to a place where firing was going on. It is just this sort of people who suffered most: door-keepers and commissionaires who had to go about their ordinary business and take the risk of being in dangerous places. One extraordinarily typical incident was told me by an eye-witness. A man was walking up the Neglinii Proiesd, a big street, in which the Ermitage Restaurant is situated; he was deaf and could not hear the noise of the firing; after a time he was wounded in the leg. He saw the blood trickling on the snow, and he made the sign of the cross and lay down and folded his arms together, resigning himself to fate. After a time a poodle came along the street and began sniffing at his head; this was more than he could bear, and he jumped up again and, not noticing anything particular going on, pursued his way quietly home. I think the police behaved exceedingly well and the soldiers as well as could be expected. They were not, of course, responsible for indiscriminate bombardments, which were entirely due to the military in authority, and not, as is loosely stated, to the Governor-General, Admiral Dubassov. In some cases the authorities showed almost inspired ineptness. For instance, there is a large weaving factory in Moscow, the workmen of which had not struck. The police, with Cossacks, made a raid on it at night to search for arms. They found none; they ransacked the barracks of the men, and the men among whose chattels they found leaflets or any papers they beat. On the next day two-thirds of these men went on strike. This happened yesterday. Another case of the sort of thing which happens is

worth mentioning. There is a house in which a Jew, a Liberal family, and a rich pork butcher dwell. The Liberal family have a boy of twelve, who had been talking about the revolution with pardonable boyish excess of zeal. The pork butcher said that the whole place was going to be blown up. On the following day soldiers arrived and began to shoot at the house. The owner, on inquiring the reason, received the reply: "You have got a Jew in the house, and we shall go on firing till you give us a nachai (a *pourboire*)." They did this every day. What the trouble really amounted to was this: an organised street fight, which lasted a week (nothing at all approaching either 1832 or 1848 or 1871 in Paris), and which caused a vast deal of damage to the inhabitants, and inflicted on them a considerable loss of life, besides pecuniary losses resulting from the stoppage of trade, &c. In the Paris Commune it should be remembered that a great many people were shot in cold blood after it was over, as a punishment, quite apart from the losses which occurred during the fighting.

I am perfectly convinced, perhaps wrongly, that the Government is in reality responsible for the troubles, owing to its dilatoriness in making laws. I know the answer to this. It is said: "How can you carry out reforms when the people won't let you do so—when the moment they are undertaken a series of strikes and disturbances begin, and public servants behave in a manner which would not for a moment be tolerated in the most progressive of Western nations?" On the other hand it is obvious that all the strikes and disturbances which occurred during last year arose

from the fact of the delay in the granting of reforms. And now when the people see this delay still existing, and, rightly or wrongly, argue that nothing has been given them till they extorted it, it is perhaps natural that their frame of mind should be one of excited exasperation. The Government expects them to behave reasonably, act reasonably, and think reasonably. They are in a frame of mind when reasonable action or thought is difficult of attainment, and the cause of their demented attitude is the action of the Government in the past. I do not defend them, but I understand them. My heart is with them; my head is against them. Their situation seems to me to resemble that of a man who for years has been kept on the verge of starvation, and is suddenly given champagne (liberty of the Press), and is promised a fixed and daily system of meals, consisting of wholesome food (Parliament). Then the same people who starved him begin to be dilatory in starting his new *régime*. Is it not easy to understand that the conduct of such a man would not be likely to be reasonable? I hope that one of the results of the events in Moscow will be to make the Government realise the pressing necessity of taking some steps to win the confidence of all that is "Moderate" in Russia. I hope also that it will impress on all the "Moderates" the necessity of combination and co-operation; because the revolutionaries declare that they will strike again in March if they do not get what they wish, and that the events of Moscow will be repeated in St. Petersburg. If they decide on this, no amount of arrests and repression will

prevent them, and if the private houses of St. Petersburg are to be subjected to indiscriminate bombardment the outlook is indeed serious. Other results are these. The soldiers have been proved to be loyal, but a Government cannot subsist on bayonets alone. Again, there will be a large number of workmen out of work; these men when they go back to their villages will be met with some such remarks as these: "No money. You struck? What for? Get out."

These two last mentioned facts should make strikes in the future more difficult. Some people say that nothing will pacify the revolutionaries; possibly, but the important question is, how far will the revolutionaries be supported by public opinion? That depends entirely on the action of the Government. It is certainly untrue to say that public opinion in Moscow was against the revolutionaries, if it is an exaggeration to say that it supported them. This leads us to another question: What do the people here think of it all? In answer I can only repeat what I said in my last letter: there exists violent and bitter partisanship on both sides; there exists also a large class of onlookers which is half-indifferent, half-resigned, and half-sceptical—in the main indifferent. But if one is to go by facts one can point to the small crowd—a selected and, in some parts, I believe, a paid crowd of men—who attended the manifestation for the Emperor's birthday, the vast crowd which attended Bauman's funeral, and the great numbers of working men and others who have been fighting against the Government these last few days. When I was talking to the wounded soldiers to-day in the hospital they told me that they had

heard from men returning from the Far East that the reports of a large mutiny in the Army there were untrue, that there had been discontent about not coming home and a small rising, but nothing like what was reported. One man said to me: "We may ask for more soup and meat, but is it likely we are going to mutiny for that? They will give us more if we ask for it; soldiers can't strike, it is as if the whole population were to strike." I refrained from pointing out that this is what exactly had occurred in October. I answered by my simile of the starving man who is suddenly given champagne.

To-day I tried the Sortes Virgilianæ with regard to the present situation and the chief actors of the drama of Russia. The result was as follows:

1. (For Count Witte)

"dextra discedens impulit altam
Haud ignara modi puppim."—Æ. x. 245.

2. (The general situation)

"Extemplo turbati animi, concussaque vulgi
Pectora, et arrectæ stimulis haud mollibus iræ.
Arma manu trepidi poscunt; fremit arma juventus,
Flent mæsti mussantque patres. Hic undique clamor
Dissensu vario magnus se tollit in auras."

Æ. xi. 451.

January 2nd.

I went this afternoon, for the second time to-day, to the Soldiers' Hospital. One of them asked me whether Paris was in Turkey. He said the Turks were nice. Another asked me whether there wasn't

a place where it was all water. I described Venice as best I could. On my way to the hospital I went to the Hôtel Dresden. Metrofan has been killed. His sister and his wife arrived in tears and in a terrible state. He was shot by a shell.

January 3rd.

In the hospital a soldier told me two fairy tales; one was about a wizard, and the other was in octosyllabic verse. It took twenty-five minutes to tell. When he alluded to the "cloak of darkness" he called it a "waterproof" cloak.

January 4th.

A cabman who drove me home last night drove me again to-day. He said it was lucky I had taken him yesterday, because he had not had another fare; and that he had told his comrades all about it, and had said he would have been lost had not the Lord sent him a Barine, and such a Barine too! (I had heavily overpaid him.) I said, "I suppose you said, 'God sent you a fool.'" "Oh! Barine, don't offend God," he answered. The cabmen are a constant source of amusement to me here. The other day, when I was driving, the cabman stopped and made another one stop to admire his horse. After we drove on again, we kept on meeting again, and every time we met we slowed down, and the conversation about the horse and how much it had cost was continued.

January 5th.

I taught a soldier at the hospital the Latin alphabet. He said he would write me a letter soon in Latin

letters; only he did not understand the use of the letters W and X; but he added, I will somehow or other find letters which will serve as equivalents to these in the Russian alphabet.

From having had much conversation with people who defend the revolutionaries with what seems to me nonsensical exaggeration, I feel a wave of reaction coming over me. I can never resist this subtle spirit of contradiction when I am with people who belong to a party, and hear them express party feeling in unmeasured and exaggerated terms. If I am with violent Conservatives a subtle spirit of Liberalism rises within me, and *vice versâ*. Besides this, I hate political *parties*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "INTELLIGENZIA"

January 6th.

I ARRIVED at St. Petersburg this morning. I have been trying to formulate my reactionary feelings. I will put them on paper; although I know I shall only have to spend a very short time with real reactionaries to be driven straight back into the opposite camp. But lately at Moscow I have had a heavy dose of anti-governmental unfairness. Too heavy for the present, although perhaps I shall one day in the future think that it was not unfair at all.

I asked a man the other day, who is employed in the "Zemstva," what party he belonged to. "I belong to the party of common sense," he answered; "unfortunately it does not exist." This exactly sums up, I think, the impression that any impartial observer must necessarily derive from the present situation in Russia. Common sense has gone. Hysteria and undisciplined rant have taken its place.

First, the revolutionaries. There are two kinds of revolutionaries: the active, who throw bombs at policemen and soldiers, who are ready to dare anything and sacrifice themselves; and the passive revolutionaries

who sit at home and sympathise and talk a great deal. What is their point of view?

1. They consider that all classes who are not definitely enrolled under their flag are violent reactionaries and are fit to be classed with the "Black Hundred." The Duma that is to be, they say, will be a "Black Hundred" Duma; the present Government is purely and simply a reactionary Government composed of bureaucrats, and no good can come to Russia until the ulcer is pierced to the core, and all bureaucrats, together with the Emperor and all his family, and all his Court, are removed. The objection that the present Government is merely temporary until the Duma assembles, they meet with the counter-argument that the Government, with the franchise law as it is, is capable of influencing the elections to any extent, and that the result will be a reactionary Duma.

2. The second question is—What do they want? They say they want a Constituent Assembly and universal suffrage, and no doubt they do want this. But whether they would be satisfied with this if they were given it is another question. Personally, my experience has so far led me to believe that they would in no wise be satisfied with this; I would lay odds to this effect. I may, no doubt, be mistaken. I believe what they really want is for Russia to become a federation of autonomous States represented by a Republic. Some of the more moderate are either opposed to this or refrain from stating any opinion in favour of it, owing to the fact that they know that the Army and ninety million peasants are ready to kill

any one within reach if the "Gasudar" is to be tampered with.

They fear that if the question of a Republic is brought forward there will be a general massacre of the educated bourgeoisie, the so-called "Intelligenzia." Nothing is more probable. Some people say that nothing will really change the attitude of these people: no more than any amount of measures which one of Lord Salisbury's Cabinets might have adopted would have changed the opinion of the supporters of Mr. Gladstone or Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, or *vice versâ*. That it is utterly futile to expect common sense or common fairness from them. That they have their party feeling, to which they are ready to sacrifice everything, and that it is infinitely stronger and more bitter, and necessarily stronger and more bitter, than anything of which we have had experience in England during the last century.

Some people object that they understand the militant revolutionaries being in this frame of mind, but they do not understand the more intelligent passive and detached supporters of the advanced party sharing such childish views. The more intelligent and detached supporters are even more violent in their talk than the militant fighters. At present the kind of argument one hears used is like the following, which I have heard with my own ears. I have heard intelligent cultivated people say: "How wicked and cowardly of the Government to fire upon the revolutionaries, since they have guns and the revolutionaries haven't got any." The English mind, which, be it Liberal or Conservative, tends to common sense, revolts against such reasoning.

It is rare to find in Russia an Englishman who sympathises with the revolutionaries. English common sense revolts at the hysterical impatience which demands the immediate fulfilment of measures more radical and socialist than exist in any European state, and the common British sense of fairness is violated at hearing of the wanton murder of policemen, who earn a poor living and are in no way responsible for the misdeeds of the Government, exalted as a patriotic execution worthy of Harmodius and Aristogiton.

On the other hand I think we fail—I am alluding to Englishmen who visit Russia, and not to those who live here permanently—to realise that the Russians have been up to now destitute of certain guarantees which Englishmen regard as a matter of course, and that they do not consider they have obtained these guarantees yet; and here it is difficult to contradict them.

Lately an incident happened which has proved a kind of focussing glass concentrating the opinions of both parties. The revolutionaries walked into the house of the head of the detective police service, dragged him from his family circle and shot him. Somewhat later a police officer named Ermolov walked into the house of a doctor and shot him before his wife's eyes. The officer gave himself up to the authorities and said his act was due to momentary aberration. Around these incidents both parties wage a war of tongues. The sympathisers with the revolutionaries talk of the martyrdom of the doctor; whereas their opponents say that the fuss they are making is unjustifiable since they did the very same thing.

Personally I think that the weak side of the Government case is this: that the revolutionaries are sure of punishment if caught; whereas the official who does wrong is not punished, and his wrong-doing is surely more heinous because he is the representative of the law. On the other hand I think the wanton murder of policemen has nothing of the heroic in it, and when I hear it spoken of in terms of admiration I am disgusted.

As to the opponents of the revolutionaries, they also attack the Government, and especially Count Witte. They say that the only supporters of Count Witte are foreigners. The *Slovo* newspaper said, for instance, that foreigners only supported Count Witte because they desired the enfeeblement of Russia. But reactionaries say that the Russian revolution is entirely fostered and supported by a foreign Government. Now it cannot be to the French Government's interest for Russia's credit to collapse, nor can it be to the German Government's interest for Russia to become a federation of autonomous States; therefore it must be the English Government, and, when pressed, they admit this. But if the English Press is trying to ruin Russia by supporting Count Witte, it is obvious that it cannot be at the same time trying to ruin Russia by supporting the revolutionaries. One of these two statements must be untrue; quite apart from the question as to whether the collapse of Russia's credit would prove a material advantage to England. The fact is that the reactionaries who talk in this strain are politically limited in their ideas; they know practically nothing either of England or of any other country, they merely repeat

old catchwords and musty traditions which have been proved to be absurd.

Now apart from these reactionary Jingoes, who are really of no importance whatsoever now, there is a large class of people who six months ago would have been called red revolutionaries, and who now call themselves "Moderates," and are called by the revolutionaries members of the "Black Gang."

These people wish for the most speedy fulfilment of the Manifesto of the 17th of October; they blame the Government for its delay in making laws, and they blame Count Witte. But they look upon the Duma as being competent to settle the various aspirations of the various parties. They should be a strong party; the trouble is that up to the present time they have never seen their way either to support the Government or to form a homogeneous party among themselves. It is possible that the recent events at Moscow may have the effect of causing them to coalesce. It is to be hoped that this will happen; for in them lies the safe *via media* between the two extremes of reaction and anarchy.

It will be noticed that all these various parties are united with regard to one detail, that is in their blame of Count Witte. It is also worth mentioning that in all the innumerable attacks made on Count Witte nobody has so far had the ingenuity or the perspicacity to name his possible successor. Would the revolutionaries really like him to go? I doubt it. They would have, in the first place, nobody to attack; in the second place, they would risk having a more reactionary successor. For that reason I have never up to now

believed in any of the countless reports regarding Count Witte's immediate resignation.

At present the Government is feeling extremely confident owing to the way in which recent events have turned out; the revolutionaries also profess to be in no wise disheartened; they say that the Moscow rising is nothing in comparison with what they will do in March, and that seeing that they have exhausted the efficacy of strikes and armed risings they will adopt the method of terrorism and blow up Government buildings with dynamite (in March). I have heard intelligent sympathisers with the revolutionaries talking of such a policy with enthusiasm, saying that this is the only way to deal with the Government, and that the Duma, such as it will be, is not only of no account but will never come into existence.

These people are members of the Russian "Intelligenzia," or middle professional class. They have many admirable qualities, and I live among them and like them; but I think that sometimes some of their members talk most wildly and ought to know better. Up to now, of course, they have been carefully prevented by the Government from taking any part in politics whatsoever, and they feel now that vast possibilities have been opened to them; that it is they who made the revolution, and that it is they who are going to rule the country.

Only at present they have not succeeded in producing a great man. They arrogate to themselves the position of sole spokesmen and representatives of the Russian people, and at this also common sense revolts. For apart from the fact of the peasants distrusting them, and

the Army hating them, what have they done for Russia? Possibly it was not they who brought about the Constitution. They class the whole gentry and aristocracy with the Bureaucrats under one sweeping ban of blame and abuse; but the gentry laid the foundations of reform and revolution long before they existed as a class at all (*vide* the Decembrists, 1825). Moreover, the gentry gave to Russia Poushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Tolstoi, Turgeniev, Tchaikovski, and Dostoievski; in fact, her literature, her art, her music, her poetry; all her great men and men of genius. In the sphere of the arts they have made Russia hideous by importing a debased *art nouveau* from Munich; and in the sphere of literature they have produced some excellent writers of short stories. In verse (the verse of such writers as "Skitaletzt" is weaker than the prose of Andreev and Co.) the English equivalent would be the political poetry of Mr. Alfred Austin; the political tendencies of the Russian writers, of course, differ widely from that of the English Laureate, whose work, although it has met with public recognition, would, perhaps, have made England less famous as a literary nation were it the sole representative of our poetical literature.

Now that I have disburdened myself on the subject of the unfairness of the "Intelligenzia," I feel better. According to the oriental fashion I should at once add counter-arguments giving all that there is to be said in their favour. This I will do another day.

MOSCOW, *January 13th.*

I came back to Moscow on the 10th. I saw the old year out (it is the Russian New Year's Eve) with the

kind family who live on the floor above mine, and with whom I always have my meals. They played Vindt all night. When the New Year came "A happy New Year" was drunk in champagne.

CHAPTER IX

THE BEGINNING OF THE REACTION

MOSCOW, *January 14th.*

TO-DAY is the Russian New Year's Day. To-day is also Sunday, so it would seem a fitting occasion to preach a long sermon on Russia. I have been amusing myself by finding suitable texts for such a sermon. They are all from the works of Renan, a man who gave a good deal of thought to the various political movements and phases of the world's history, and expressed himself with that nice lucidity and divine ease which we call a perfect style.

The first is this: "La Révolution française fut la gageure d'un petit nombre d'énergumènes qui réussirent à faire croire qu'ils avaient entraîné la nation."

No. 2: "Éternelle puérilité des répressions pénales, appliquées aux choses de l'âme."

No. 3: "Dans ses accès de vertu, l'homme croit pouvoir se passer entièrement de l'égoisme et de l'intérêt propre; l'égoisme prend sa revanche, en prouvant que l'absolu désintéressement engendre des maux plus graves que ceux qu'on avait cru éviter par la suppression de la propriété."

These are my texts, and, as is usually the case when the text is good, the sermon is superfluous.

New Year's Day is, we are so often told, a good occasion to look forward and behind. What, then, is the outlook at present? Life is going on at St. Petersburg and Moscow exactly as usual, and here, save in the smouldering ruins of the factory of the Presnaya and various broken windows and damaged cornices, there is nothing to tell one that anything unusual has occurred. The Government is said to be confident. Foreign loans are in the air. The revolutionaries, it is said, have been crushed and dispersed. Electioneering work is beginning; in fact, all is going as well as can be expected. That is one view—an optimistic view which I do not altogether share. In the first place, when people say that the Revolutionary Party or its leaders are a minority I would reply by quoting text No. 1. "Laws, in a country which is following an idea, are always made by the minority," says Renan, immediately before the sentence I have quoted.

Secondly, the Moscow episode does not seem to me to have affected the revolutionary movement in the slightest degree. The numbers of the killed among the insurgents were trifling; all the important and real leaders of the Revolution had left Moscow before this affair, which was, in fact, conducted by boys and girls; and if a number of boys and girls can, at the head of a mass of workmen, bring the garrison to distraction, take guns from the troops, and force the authorities to bombard the houses of the inhabitants without raising universal indignation, things must be fairly serious.

To say that they have alienated public sympathy is certainly untrue; for although they started the fighting, as soon as the authorities answered with artillery the common ordinary man in the street began in many cases to say that it was the fault of the Government and the authorities. Sympathy in Russia is always certain to be with the people who are shot, be they right or wrong.

"Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim-gun and they have not."

That is, they argue, the motto of the authorities, and that is exactly the sentiment which arouses the indignation of the citizen. A cabman asked some one the other day when they were going to punish "him." Who is "him"? he was asked. "Admiral Dubassov," was the answer. "Surely the Emperor will punish him for shooting at the houses." The energetic manner in which the rising was suppressed has, I am told, produced a good effect in Europe; doubtless energetic measures were not only necessary but imperative in the first instance; whether the continuation of them now is a mistake or not only the future can show. One fact, however, is certain, and that is that these measures are being conducted with the same arbitrariness which has characterised the action of the Russian police in the past, and are causing intense exasperation. There is a word in Russian, "Proisvol," which means acting, like Wordsworth's river, according to your "own sweet will," unheedful of, and often in defiance of, the law. It is precisely this manner of acting which

has brought about the revolution in Russia. It is against the "Proisvol" that all the educated classes and half the official class rebelled. And it is this very "Proisvol" against which the whole country rose on strike, which the Government promised should henceforth disappear, and which is at the present moment triumphantly installed once more as the ruling system.

Of course it may be objected that anarchy and lawless revolution can only be met by severe repression; but the question is: Must it be met by arbitrary and lawless repression? Hang the insurgents if you like, but why shoot a doctor who has got nothing to do with it before you know anything about him? To stop a newspaper like the *Russkie Viedomosti*, for instance, is an act of sheer "Proisvol," the reason given being that it had subscription lists for workmen's unions, which it denies, saying that the money was for the wounded. Here I point to my second text. All this repression seems to me utterly futile. The future, however, can show whether this is indeed so.

In the meantime election programmes are appearing. That of the Constitutional Democrats has come out, and is moderate in tone, although its clauses are extensive. It insists, among other things, on universal suffrage and an eight-hours' day for the workmen. Here I would point to text 3. Everybody whom I have seen in Russia in any way connected with the working man is agreed in saying that an eight-hours' day is an absolute impossibility. That a Russian workman's eight hours means in reality about six hours. That no factory in Russia could exist on these terms. The Constitutional Democrats seem in this

case to have omitted the factor of human egoism and interest.

One of the gravest factors of the general situation is that Eastern Siberia seems to be entirely in the hands of the revolutionaries, who are apparently managing the railway and everything else with perfect order, while the troops, anxious only to get home, are taking any engines they can lay hands on and racing back, one train literally racing another!

Altogether it cannot be said that the outlook is particularly cheerful. There is one bright point so far, and that is that all parties seem anxious to convoke the Duma. The Liberals want it, the Conservatives want it, the Extreme Radicals sanction the elections. The Radicals say it will be packed by the Government; but I do not see how this is possible. They say they will let it meet, and that if it proves "a Black Hundred Duma" they will destroy it. They call everything which is not Radical "Black Hundred." But, as I have said before, and as I cannot tire of saying, it is useless to blame these extreme parties for talking nonsense. They have been driven to this nonsense by the still greater want of sense on the part of the Government of Russia during the last twenty years, and in wanting to wipe out this system altogether they are, after all, in the right. Unfair they may be, hysterical, and absurd. So were the Jacobins; but the absurdity, extravagance, and violence of the Jacobins were only the logical result of the "Ancien Régime." So it is here, although it is misleading to compare the present movement in Russia with the French Revolution.

And behind all the rumours and conflicts of various

parties looms the agrarian question; the ninety million peasants who till the land in the same manner in which they tilled it four hundred years ago; whose land from generation to generation dwindles by partition, while the population increases. How and when is this question going to be solved? It can only be solved by the education of the peasants themselves; but the question is what can be done to gain time and to make this education possible. My outlook is, perhaps, too pessimistic. I do not know. I only feel that the whole revolutionary movement is beyond all forces of control, and that no measures in the world can put it back now; whether it could by wisdom be led into safe channels is another question. Such a thing has seldom been seen in the history of the world, and it is, after all, only out of the past that we make the future.

To get rid of these gloomy ideas I went to the hospital, where New Year's Day was celebrated with great gusto; there was a Christmas-tree, dancing and song, and it was delightful to see a little tiny boy and a huge soldier dancing opposite each other. The Russian peasants dance to each other, and separately, of course, like Highlanders when they dance a reel or a schottische. It was gay and yet rather melancholy; there were so many cripples, and it reminded me a little of the Christmas feast described in Dostoievski's "Letters from a Dead House."

January 18th.

To-day I heard a characteristic story. A student told it to me. A peasant was looking at a rich man's house in one of the streets of Moscow. An agitator

went up to him and said: "Think of the rich man living in that great house, and think of your miserable position."

"Yes," said the peasant cheerfully, "it's a big house; he's a proper Barine."

"But," said the agitator, much irritated, "it's most unjust that he should live in such a big house and that you should live in a small house. You should turn him out of it."

"How could that be?" answered the peasant. "He is used to being rich. All his life he has lived in plenty. What would he do in poverty? We are used to poverty, and we must have pity on those who are not used to it."

The agitator then gave the peasant up and went away in disgust.

January 20th.

I arrived in St. Petersburg this morning. Yesterday a Russian friend of mine discussed with me my ideas on the "Intelligenzia" and their revolutionary sympathies which I had embodied in a letter to the *Morning Post*. My friend said that I had committed a gross injustice to the Russian "Intelligenzia," and that my letter, by reflecting the opinion of Englishmen who had spent but a short time in Russia, and judged everything from the point of view of a country where political liberty had long since been an established fact, gave a wrong impression. There is some truth in this, no doubt. It is difficult here to keep a cool head and not to be swayed by circumambient influence. The danger does not lie in being influenced by those

who immediately surround one, but rather in being influenced inversely by their opinions. I mean one has only to talk to a revolutionary or to a conservative long enough, at the present moment, to be convinced that his adversary is right. I still hold, however, to what I wrote about the unfairness and exaggerations of the sympathisers with the revolution among the "Intelligenzia." I think they are incapable of looking at the matter impartially, and no wonder. Moreover, the Government past and present is responsible for their frame of mind. Again, I still hold to what I said, that the "Intelligenzia" have not produced a great man; but instead of retracting what I said, I will, as I said I would do, after the oriental fashion, having stated all that there was to be said against them, try and set forth all that is to be said in favour of the "Intelligenzia."

In the first place, what is the "Intelligenzia"? Properly speaking, it is composed of every one who can read or write. But the term is generally used to designate those members of the middle class who belong to the professional classes—doctors, professors, teachers, journalists, and literary men. In its largest sense it is the whole middle class, from which nine-tenths of the officials are drawn. But when Russians speak of it they generally mean the middle class, excluding officials. Such as it is, it contains, as well as the most hot-headed revolutionaries and violent youths, all that is best and most intelligent and cultivated in Russia, all men of science who have done remarkable work in various branches, all doctors, whose life in the country is a life of difficulty and

self-sacrifice which it would be difficult to exaggerate, all the professors and the teachers, the actors, the singers, the musicians, the artists, the writers. These people have for years been the absolute prey of the irresponsibility and blundering stupidity of the higher bureaucrats. They have with difficulty been able to obtain foreign books (Matthew Arnold's "Essays on Criticism" was one of the books on the index two years ago); in teaching, half the facts of history have been forbidden them; and at the slightest suspicion of not being "well-intentioned" they have been placed under police surveillance and often been subjected to gross indignities. Is it to be wondered at that they are bitter now? The average man and woman of the Russian middle class is incomparably better educated than the average English man or woman of the same class. They are saturated with the foreign classics. They often speak two languages besides Russian; and they are conversant with modern thought in the various European countries as far as it is allowed to reach them. When one sees the average Englishman abroad one is aghast at his ignorance and his want of education in comparison with these people. I have constantly, both here and in Manchuria, found to my shame that I knew nothing of English history in comparison with the Russians I met. The reason is very simple: they are taught at school things which will be useful to them. Every one is given a general foundation of knowledge. I do not believe the average Englishman to be more stupid than the average foreigner, but he is not educated. A man may go through a public school and even a

university in England and come out at the end ludicrously ignorant of everything except the classical books he was obliged to "get up," and at our public schools, with a few brilliant exceptions, the education of the average boy amounts to this: that he does not learn Latin and Greek, and he certainly learns nothing else. I never heard English history mentioned at Eton, and all the English history I know I learnt in the nursery. The average Russian boy knows far more about English history than the average English boy, let alone European history; and a cultivated Russian of the middle class is saturated with John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Ruskin, John Morley, Buckle, and Carlyle; whereas Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and Shelley are treated as Russian classics. Only yesterday I travelled with a man who, although he could not speak English, was intimately conversant with our whole literature, and told me that the whole generation to which he belonged had been taught to find their intellectual food in England and not in France and Germany. "How is it," he asked me, "that we Russians who live on English thought, and admire and respect you as a nation far more than other nations, have been so long at loggerheads with you politically?" I said that I thought the reason was that, although the cultivated and the average educated Russian knows our literature well, the nation as a whole does not know us, and we do not know Russia at all—for most intelligent Englishmen are ludicrously ignorant of Russia. Besides this, the bureaucratic *régime* has acted like a barrier between the two countries and fostered and fed on the misunderstanding.

As far as politics are concerned things have moved on. Some weeks ago it was possible to believe that the Government had been wantonly hampered in its well-intentioned efforts, now it is only too plain that by their acts they are doing their best to justify the violence of the revolutionaries. The "Proisvol" (arbitrariness) continues on an extensive scale. People in Moscow are arrested every day and without discrimination. Influential people do not dare to inscribe their names on the lists of the Constitutional Democratic Party for fear of being arrested. The police have unlimited powers, and all the methods of the old *régime* are flourishing once more. I do not believe, as is sure to be objected, that the action of the revolutionaries has rendered this necessary. I do not believe that the best way to fight revolution is by lawless and arbitrary repression. Lastly, and most important, it is not the immorality or the illegality of the methods that I find reprehensible, but their stupidity and ineffectiveness. If all this repression were the iron working of one great central mind, which ruthlessly imposed its will on the nation, breaking down all obstacles and restoring order, it would be excusable. But it is not. I do not believe the Government is responsible for what happens in Moscow; and in Moscow itself the various authorities shift the responsibility on to each other. It is the old story of the bureaucratic system—no responsibility and no individual efficiency, but a happy-go-lucky, drifting, and blind incompetence, striking where it should not strike, being lenient too late, and never foreseeing what is under its very nose. When one comes to think, it is not surprising, considering that the instruments

with which Count Witte has to deal are of the old regulation bureaucratic pattern. How, for instance, can the Minister of the Interior, M. Durnovo, be expected to adopt any other methods than those which are ingrained in him? It is as if the Liberals persuaded Mr. Chamberlain to speak at a public meeting and then expressed surprise at finding that he was in favour of Tariff Reform. When some of the revolutionaries were summarily executed after the recent troubles in Moscow, a sentence of Tacitus came back to me which is peculiarly applicable to the old Russian bureaucratic methods: "Interfectis Varrone consule designato et Petronio Turpiliano consulari . . . inauditi atque indefensi tamquam innocentes perierunt" (Varro and Turpilianus were executed without trial and defence, so that they might just as well have been innocent).

The whole system of arresting doctors and professors, prohibiting newspapers and plays, censoring books and songs, is now, whatever may have been its effect in the past, childishly futile. Moreover, even this is blunderingly done. The harmless newspapers are suppressed and more violent ones appear. But the point is the futility of it all; as soon as a serious newspaper is stopped it reappears on the next day under another name. Each repressed satirical newspaper (and these journals are often exceedingly scurrilous) finds a successor. It is not as if the revolutionaries were the result of the newspapers; it is the newspapers which are the reflection of the revolutionaries; and until you can repress every revolutionary the spirit which finds its vent in these organs will exist. To repress the Liberal spirit altogether it will be necessary

to suppress nearly all the thinking population of Russia. The only hope is that all this is, after all, only temporary, and that the meeting of the Duma will put an end to this riot of lawlessness and inefficiency. One competent man like Count Witte is not enough to deal with things which are happening all over the country in so large a place as Russia, and he is bound to trust himself to minor authorities—and these in many cases prove themselves unfit for their task. "Why are they chosen?" it may be asked. The answer is: "Who else is there to choose until the whole pack of cards is thoroughly reshuffled or rather destroyed, and a new pack, men chosen by the Duma, is adopted?"

"But," it is objected, "however much you reshuffle the cards, the pack will be the same." This is true; but one radical change would make all the difference in the world, and that would be the introduction of the system of responsibility. Whenever there has been in a Russian town a governor who had declared his firm intention of holding his subordinates responsible for their acts, and has put such a declaration into practice, things have always gone well. There was for years a chief of the police at Moscow, who was just such a man. The trouble is now, that however good a subordinate official may be, there is no guarantee that he may not be removed at any minute owing to the passing whim of those who are above.

CHAPTER X

CURRENT IDEAS IN ST. PETERSBURG

ST. PETERSBURG, *January 27th.*

PEOPLE are now saying that the revolutionary movement in Russia has suffered a complete defeat. I do not share this point of view; my reason is not based upon prophetic discernment into the future, but on what has happened in the past.

If we are in the presence of a stream and note the beginnings of its turbulent course, and then observe that it has met with the obstacle of a dam and burst through that obstacle, and that this occurrence has been repeated six times, with the result that every time the dam has been burst the stream has gathered in strength, when this dam is made a seventh time we are justified in concluding that as the dam is the same in kind as it was before, and the stream also, the stream will break through it a seventh time, although every time the dam was made the onlookers made the observation that the progress of the stream was definitively impeded. Now this is precisely what has happened with regard to the Russian revolutionary movement up to the present time. And we are now witnessing an act of a drama which began in 1895.

The course of events was like this: When the Emperor Nicholas II. came to the Throne a deputation of the Zemstva were told that their moderate demands for the beginning of reform were senseless dreams. Upon these words the first dam was built, and it took the form of universal repression.

In December, 1904, the ukase, embodying the nullified projects of Prince Mirsky, was immediately followed by a threatening Manifesto, and a second dam was made. This dam, however, was ineffectual, and it was followed by the rising of the workmen of the 9th of January, and when this meeting was dispersed by the troops, and a third dam constructed, people said—and among them people who lived here and ought to have known better—that the Russian revolution was over. February 18th saw the publication of the two contradictory Manifestoes and the Boulygin project, and during this time the dam took the shape of the Trepoff dictatorship, which, as General Trepoff is a competent man, proved to be for the time being more effectual than the obstacles which had hitherto been employed.

However, in spite of this there came the incidents of the mutiny on board the *Kniaz Potemkin* and at Kronstadt and Libau. This was followed by the concession of the law giving the Duma on August 6th, which was accompanied by a law forbidding public meetings. A fourth dam had been made. But the current only increased in strength. The Agrarian movement began. The Labour movement increased. Meetings took place everywhere till the dam burst, owing to the fact that the whole of Russia went on strike in October, 1905.

Then the Manifesto of the 17th of October was

given—a Manifesto granting freedom of meeting and of speech, but no laws. It was followed by the declaration of martial law in Poland. This measure was in its turn succeeded by the St. Petersburg strike, the Sevastopol mutiny, and a violent agrarian agitation in the province of Saratov, which spread all over the "black soil" country in Russia. Repressive measures followed. The Zemstvo leaders then addressed themselves to Count Witte, and asked for a cessation of repressive measures, the control of irresponsible bureaucrats in the provinces, and the right of universal suffrage. This was refused. The postal officials, who had formed a union, were arrested; there ensued postal strikes in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Thereupon a law was promulgated—this was the fifth dam—by which each provincial governor could declare his government to be outside the law. This was followed by the armed rising in Moscow, and after this a sixth dam was made by the adoption of repressive measures of arrest all over Russia.

Now, such questions as whether the revolutionary party was right or wrong; whether they were too much in a hurry, and too impulsive and violent in their methods; whether postal officials and Government servants are justified in striking, &c., are altogether beside the mark. The fact is that they have six times been successful in bursting the barrier which has been placed to oppose them. And now once again people are saying that because the movement has been temporarily checked—because a dam has been made—the movement is over; that the stream will not be able to continue its course. This is where I take leave to differ from those who have from the first predicted the

ultimate collapse of the revolutionary movement. I differed then—in January, 1905—and I continue to differ now. I am aware that I am laying myself open to the charge of prophesying. "When you keep a diary," said a shrewd observer of a past generation, "don't write down public events which you can find in any record, but put down what you think will happen, and then you will be astonished to see how wrong you have been."

ST. PETERSBURG, *February 1st.*

I have been amusing myself by putting down some current ideas—those of some people I have met here and some of my own, in the form of a dialogue. The people represented are not real people. They are scarcely even types, but mere mouthpieces of current ideas. I have not tried to describe a conversation such as one now hears in Russia, but I have attempted to put in the form of dialogue certain ideas I have heard expressed by my friends and certain opinions which have occurred to myself during such intercourse.

"There are three parties I could belong to," said the small landlord; "the alliance of October 17th, the alliance of Right and Order, and the Constitutional Democratic Party. I would be willing to support any one of these three, in the hope that they would lead directly or indirectly to the disappearance of the present dynasty and to the establishment of a real autocracy."

The student laughed. "The Constitutional Democrats will not lead you to an autocracy of any kind," he said.

"I am not so sure," said the landlord. "Napoleon

was the child of the Revolution, and so was Cromwell. I support the Radicals in the same way in which I would have supported the Puritans to get rid of Charles I., and make way for Cromwell."

"And Charles II.?" asked the professor, who had just returned from a prolonged stay in England.

"Precisely, and Charles II.," said the landlord. "The Charles the Firsts of history are invincibly ignorant, whereas the Charles the Seconds have learned the lesson and make ideal monarchs. One cannot always be governed by men of genius, and in the intervening period, when the genius is absent, I prefer to be governed by a man of the world, such as Charles II. or Louis XVIII., rather than by demagogues and idealists."

"It is better to be governed by honest demagogues and idealists than by dishonest Bureaucrats," said the student. "The Bureaucrats made the war."

"When the war was declared you students marched cheering into the streets, and I myself happening to be in uniform that day—I am in the Reserve—was carried in reluctant triumph on the shoulders of an enthusiastic crowd. The war can be blamed, not because it was immoral, for it was not more immoral than any other war, but because it was made too late, and because it was unsuccessful."

"The war," said the professor, "was a war made by irresponsible capitalists, in the same way as the South African War was the work of a gang of financiers, and had a true Englishman of genius, such as Gladstone or Bright, been alive, the war would not have been possible."

"Yes," said the student, "the feeling here was never so

great against England during this war as during the war in South Africa."

"The English," answered the landlord, "made the same mistake as we did; they knew nothing about South Africa, and made the war later than they should have done; had they waited longer the Afrikander element would have probably turned them out of South Africa altogether, and they would have lost their prestige and their Colonies. Bismarck foresaw this, and hoped that it might happen."

"The English have gained nothing by having betrayed their ancient tradition, and sacrificed to false gods," said the professor, "but now they are returning to the true path, and it is to Liberal England that we must look for example and support."

"You mean," said the landlord, "that one set of men, including some bright intellects and a number of average, that is to say, mediocre men, have been replaced by another set of men containing exactly the same proportion of capacity, mediocrity, and incompetence. By what miracle are they to govern the country better or worse than their opponents? Have they shown that they could do so in the past? And I would apply this argument to the situation here. Do you imagine that a Ministry composed of intellectuals would be radically different from a Ministry composed of Bureaucrats? The intellectuals will be merely Bureaucrats who have not learnt their business, and when they have learnt their business they will be Bureaucrats; that is, perhaps, why the Zemstvo leaders were reluctant to enter the Cabinet."

"The Zemstvo leaders were reluctant to join Count

Witte because they disapproved of his programme," said the student, "and, whether they become Bureaucrats or no, they will be under the control of society."

"The Bureaucrats are blamed for lawlessness," said the landlord, "but the revolutionaries seem to me so entirely incapable of controlling themselves that they do not lead one to believe in their capacity for controlling other people. The fact is that we Russians are all a mixture of lawlessness and apathy. We are blamed for our apathy, for our want of co-operation, but I thank Heaven for it, for did it not exist, the lawlessness would lead to excesses of a dangerous character; as it is, there is no country where an individual can enjoy such a degree of personal freedom as in Russia. Russia is the only country where the words liberty, fraternity, and equality have any reality. These things are facts in Russia. But they are not facts in England. First, as regards liberty. There is no liberty either of thought or *mœurs* in England. Liberty of thought flourishes under an autocracy; in the reign of Nero, Renan tells us, 'la liberté de penser ne fit que gagner. Cette liberté-là se trouve toujours mieux d'avoir affaire à un roi ou à un prince qu'à des bourgeois jaloux et bornés.' I do not consider my liberty of thought to be violated if I can only read an eclipsed version of the leading articles of the English and French halfpenny Press; but I do consider it violated if I am forbidden to witness a masterpiece full of thought and moral import, such as Ibsen's 'Ghosts' or a beautiful play like Mæterlinck's 'Monna Vanna.' This is the case in England. The English fetter themselves with convention, and ostracise those who revolt against the convention. You cannot

smoke in a railway refreshment-room in England. You must dress for dinner. You cannot have supper after 12.30 a.m. at a restaurant. You cannot go to a theatre on Sunday. You cannot admire anything unless it is the fashion, and once it is the fashion you must admire it. As to equality, the whole of English life is a struggle to belong to the layer of society immediately above your own, and not to be suspected of belonging to that immediately beneath your own. Hence England is the paradise of snobbery, social and intellectual. There is a mad race to be 'in the swim' socially and 'in the know' intellectually, and to read the right books and admire the right pictures. As to equality I will give you a concrete instance. Let two men get drunk in London, one a rich man and the other a poor man. If they make a disturbance and get taken up, the rich man, by taking a little trouble, will get the matter hushed up. The poor man will not get off. You will say that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor in every country. But I say that here in Russia nobody cares if you go drunk in the street, and that, whether you are rich or poor, if you do so the same thing will happen to you; you will be taken to the *uchastok* and kept there till you get sober. Whereas in England they care very much; you have to appear before a magistrate—but the rich man will get out of this. As to fraternity, the English hedge themselves round with every kind of social prejudice and barrier they can devise. Their clubs are like their prisons, places where it is forbidden to speak to your neighbour, except under special circumstances, and where you have to wear a special costume. A Russian convict

enjoys a greater freedom of social intercourse than an English shopman. I judge from their books. Read 'Kipps,' by H. G. Wells. It is a record of leaden social tyranny."

"What you call convention," said the professor, "is merely the maintenance of order. It may be exaggerated, but an exaggeration in this sense is preferable to one in the other. You can sup here at a restaurant all night, but a man may shoot you for not being brisk enough in your manifestation of loyalty."

"Many Englishmen would gladly shoot Mr. Bernard Shaw for the same offence," said the landlord, "but they have not the courage of their convictions."

"What you call freedom," said the professor, "is precisely the opposite of freedom. It is lawlessness. Your neighbour can kill you with impunity. Where does your freedom come in the matter? What freedom is there in not being allowed to read a foreign newspaper unless it is expurgated, or in being sent to Siberia for disapproving of the methods of Government officials?"

"The people who were sent to Siberia," said the landlord, "were those who wished to overturn the existing form of government, under which the ordinary individual enjoyed peculiar liberty. And even here how mildly the Government acted! Really remarkable agitators like Tolstoi were left alone. The English acted more drastically, and hounded Byron and Shelley from the country. But when it is a question of expressing their convictions they would never throw a bomb; they cannot go further than throwing a herring at Mr. Balfour. The fact is that the English are a nation

of shopkeepers, and they have the shopkeeper's aversion from a mess in the shop."

"If that means having shopmen," said the professor, "such as Chatham, Fox, Burke, Gladstone, Bright, and Morley, I wish we were also a nation of shopkeepers. If a nation's destinies are controlled by men like Alexeiev and Bezobrassov it does not seem to me to make it less like a shop, only the shop is managed on dishonest principles."

"The greatest of all English thinkers," answered the landlord, "was a dishonest official, Lord Bacon; her greatest soldier a general who peculated, the Duke of Marlborough. The man who made England's prestige dwindle to its lowest depth was Gladstone."

"We cannot reach a lower depth than that to which the Bureaucracy has brought us," said the student.

"As a remedy you want liberal demagogues," said the landlord. "What we want is not a change of kind, but of quality; not a Liberal Cabinet and a Liberal autocrat, but a capable Cabinet and a capable autocrat; and, therefore, I support the revolutionaries, in the hope that out of the ruins and ashes of what they will destroy the phœnix may arise."

"And we," said the student, "can do without phœnixes, which we regard as a doubtful blessing; on the other hand, what we want, and what we are determined to get, are laws, not manifestoes—laws guaranteeing the elementary rights of liberty and equality; and these we are determined to attain, even at the sacrifice of the peculiar liberty, equality, and fraternity which you say we enjoy; even if the ultimate

result be that the Emperor ceases to call us *Bratzi* (little brothers) and the theatres are closed on Sunday."

ST. PETERSBURG, *February 4th.*

To-day I had a long conversation with X, one of the most enlightened Liberals in the service of the Russian Government. He said that the action of the Government in proclaiming the Manifesto of October 17th could only be compared to the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French Revolution before any constitution was defined. The Manifesto had proclaimed in Russia principles unknown in that country, and the fact remained, although it was sometimes overlooked, that it was the Government and not a National Assembly which had taken the momentous step. Whatever circumstances may have provoked this step, it is none the less true that Count Witte by taking it retained the control over the general situation, and still retains it in spite of all appearances to the contrary. This was a merit not recognised by his detractors, who are now universal. Then he went on to say that the source of the trouble and confusion now was that the Manifesto formed the programme and the basis of a Constitution; it was not a Constitution in itself (since it had been conferred by an Autocrat and could be taken back again); this fact had been slow in dawning on the people, unused to abstract political discussion, and most people, probably the majority, considered the Manifesto to be equivalent to an established Constitution. The trouble is, he added, that some of the most intelligent of the moderate Liberals of the upper classes do not

know what a Constitution is. If the Manifesto had been immediately followed by a Constitution, the questions which at the present time were giving rise to heated debate would never have been raised. They would have been settled before they were discussed by the public. As it was the Manifesto contained a collection of principles which all parties sought to interpret and to exploit to their own advantage. The reactionary party sees in the preservation of the word "Autocrat" the key of the situation. He added that though his party was not large, and had lost a great deal of its influence, none the less it possessed a deep root in the Conservative element in Russia. Count Witte, he said, is supposed, and rightly, to interpret the word "Autocrat" historically, and to substitute for the word "Limited" that of "Independent" (International). He then spoke of the Octobrists, the party of the 17th of October. He said that they showed conciliatory tendencies, which although obviously well meaning in times of Revolution, made for weakness. They avoid the question of title and that of the oath of the sovereign, and declare themselves satisfied with the clear and precise act guaranteeing the oath on the part of the successor to the throne; and they remain content with the Manifesto as far as the actual sovereign is concerned. The Radical parties take no interest in this question, the Social Democrats take even less, since they look to Revolution and to Revolution only for the ultimate decision of the destiny of their country. There are two other questions, he continued, which up to the present have been scarcely mentioned, nor is there much hope that the Government will have

the courage to face them unaided. One is that of the relations among the different nations of which the Russian Empire is composed, the other is the Agrarian question. This last question is not a constitutional or a legislative question. The power of the autocrat, while it existed, could alone have solved it. The autocratic power exists no longer now in fact, although its place has not yet been taken by a definite new *régime*. He said that among the mass of conflicting conjectures and rumours with regard to the future, two important things were clear: (1) that the Government was determined to retain in its hands the power to give a Constitution; (2) that it was determined to grant a Constitution and to proceed to the elections. He said it was impossible to say more at the present; everything depended on the nature of the future Assembly, and whether it would be possible for the Moderate elements to exercise any preponderating influence. Up to now they had been widely divergent and discordant among themselves. If their efforts to gain a solid majority were successful, the greatest danger would be over; if not, the Revolution was in its infancy, for if the Moderates were to fail, the two extreme parties would be left face to face, as different from one another as possible, yet both at one for different reasons in their uncompromising opposition to all temperate and constitutional reform. He said he made no allusion to the various risings and repressions, because these events exercised, in reality, only an indirect influence on the progress of the ideas he had mentioned, sometimes by facilitating their spread, and some-

times by impeding it. It had neither produced nor stopped them. There were two parallel and different currents of events now in progress in Russia. One forced itself on the attention, the other was exceedingly difficult to trace. For that reason it was futile to discuss exclusively the progress of revolutionary feeling and the ultimate success of repressive measures.

It is interesting to look back on this conversation now in December, 1906, since it shows the illusions which Russian Liberals cherished a year ago.

ST. PETERSBURG, *February 11th.*

I have put into the form of a dialogue some of the many conflicting views I have lately heard expressed with regard to Count Witte.

"We have no right," said the Moderate Liberal, "to doubt the good faith of the Government at the present moment as regards the promise of the Constitution and the elections for the Duma. Until the Government proves to us that it does not intend to keep its word we are bound to believe it."

"It has never kept its word in the past," said the student, "and everything which it is doing at present tends to show that it has no intention of doing so now."

"Count Witte knows what he is doing," said the man of business. "When our grandchildren read of this in books they will wonder why we were so blind and so obstinate, just as we now wonder at the blindness which prevailed when the opposition to Bismarck was absolutely universal."

"I share the scepticism of our young friend," said the Zemstvo representative, "but for different reasons. I

do not share your confidence in Count Witte. The basis of that confidence is in your case the fact that Count Witte is a man of business. I maintain that a man of business can only exert a real and lasting influence in the affairs of a nation in times of revolution, convulsion, and evolution, or what you please to call it, on one condition, namely, that of recognising and taking into account the force of ideas and of moral laws. You smile, and say that this is nonsense. But I say this, not because I am an idealist, for I am not one, but because I have got an open mind, which seeks the causes of certain phenomena and finds them in the existence of certain facts. One of these facts is this: that you cannot set at naught certain moral laws; you cannot trample on certain ideas without their rebounding on to you with invincible force. You men of business deny the existence of these moral laws, and scoff at the force of ideas; but it is on practice and facts that I base my argument, and not on theory. That is why men like Cromwell succeed, and why men like Metternich fail."

"And Napoleon?" asked the man of business.

"Napoleon slighted one of these laws by invading Spain, and this was the cause of his overthrow, although Napoleon was a soldier, which is an incalculable advantage."

"And Bismarck?" asked the man of business.

"Bismarck," said the Zemstvo representative, "is a case in point. He followed and used ideas. He worked for the great national ideal, the ideal of united Germany. He incarnated the national idea. What is Count Witte's ideal? A national loan or the expansion of the Russo-

Chinese Bank? It is not enough to say that the revolution is merely the work of enemies financed by foreigners, and then *Schwamm darüber*, as the Germans say. Whoever supports it, it is there; and if it were merely an artificial forced product, surely you, as a man of business, must admit that it would have died a natural death by this time. You say that the people can only be actuated by their own interests. I say that the people are often actuated by something which has nothing to do with their interests. History affords me countless examples which prove I am right. When people have been killed, tortured, and burnt for an idea, it is absurd to say they were interested. Interested in what? In the possible rewards of a future life? But people have been tortured and burnt not only for their faith but for their opinions: Giordano Bruno, De Witt, and many others. There are some, too, whose outward enthusiasm has been lined with scepticism, and who have died for a cause in which they did not even believe. And when a person now throws a bomb at a governor it may explain the fact to say he is mad, but it does not explain the fact to say that he is bought, because he knows quite well he is going to certain death. To deny this is a sign, in my opinion, of a limited intelligence. 'Il n'a pas l'intelligence assez large,' a French writer once said, 'pour concevoir que l'intérêt n'est pas seul à mener le monde, qu'il se mêle souvent et qu'il cède parfois à des passions plus fortes, voire à des passions nobles.' This is why I disbelieve in Count Witte. I believe he suffers from this limitation, the limitation from which Bismarck did not suffer. In times of peace it would not signify; in times such as these it makes all

the difference. Have you read a book by H. G. Wells called the 'Food of the Gods'? I do not know what the English think of Wells; but we, some of us at least, and the French, take him seriously as a thinker. Well, in this book there is an argument between a Prime Minister and the representative of the giant race. All the Prime Minister's arguments are excellent, but they are fundamentally wrong, because his action is morally wrong. This story applies to the situation here. A race of giants has grown up. Count Witte, with conviction and eloquence, repeats again and again that their action is impossible, that he must be helped, that the existence of mankind is at stake. But all the time he is denying to this race the right of existence. And they know they have the right to live. He is denying the moral law and saying that his opponents are only hirelings, or madmen. His arguments are specious, but the giants are there, and they will not listen; he sends troops and police against them; they answer by bombarding the country with their giant food, which causes gigantic growth to spring up wherever it falls. In our case this food takes the shape of ideas and the rights of man."

"Yes, but since he has promised a Constitution," said the Moderate Liberal, "you cannot prove that he does not mean to keep his promise."

"I feel certain he will give some kind of a Constitution," answered the Zemstvo representative. "I feel equally certain that it will mean nothing at all. I am not convinced for a moment that he believes in Constitutional Government for Russia. And if he disbelieves in it, why should he give it?"

"But what makes you think he disbelieves in it?" asked the Liberal.

"His present action," remarked the student.

"His past actions," said the Zemstvo representative. "Why did he not support Prince Mirsky's reforms? And apart from this, has he not said in the past, again and again, that a strong autocracy is the only Government suitable for Russia?"

"He is quite right there," said the man of business.

"Then you agree with me," said the Zemstvo representative, "in thinking that he does not believe in a Constitution. I think myself that a capable and wise autocracy may very well be the ideal Government. But the position now is that the autocracy has for a long time past shown itself to be neither capable nor wise, and therefore the enormous majority of thinking Russians are quite determined to do away with it. 'Absolute Princes,' Dr. Johnson said, 'seldom do any harm, but those who are governed by them are governed by chance.' We are tired of being governed by chance. We may be unreasonable, but we are determined to try something else."

"We will see," said the man of business, "assuming what you say to be true, who is the stronger, you and your giant food of ideas and moral laws, or Count Witte and his practical sense. We have the bayonets on our side."

"The bayonets of a defeated army," said the Zemstvo representative. "We will see how long you will be able to sit upon them."

"I do not pretend to be a prophet or a philosopher," answered the man of business, "but I note certain facts;

one of these is this, that ever since October I have been told by your friends that Count Witte's position is untenable, and his resignation a question of hours. It has not come about yet. He still retains the direction of affairs. Should we meet in five years' time I will discuss Count Witte's policy with you. At present we are too near to it."

"And it too far from us," said the student.

Towards the end of this conversation, a man who belonged to no party came into the room and overheard the talk. When they had finished talking he said: "As to Witte, the question seems to me to lie in this: is he acting consciously and with foresight or is he merely making the best of chance? We are all praying for a genius to appear in Russia. But, when geniuses do come, nobody ever recognises the fact until it is too late and they are dead. If Witte is acting consciously then he is a genius indeed. If he has foreseen all along what would happen, and, in a few years' time, is President of the Federation of Russian United States, having decentralised what he has so capably centralised, then I think he will be one of the greatest men who have ever lived; but, if he is merely acting as the occasion presents itself, I do not rate him higher than a Boulanger with a head for figures."

"In any case," said the Zemstvo representative, "he will provide glorious food for discussion for the future historian, and even at present the world would be a duller and greyer place without this enigmatical chameleon."

ST. PETERSBURG, *February 17th.*

I have frequently heard the opinion expressed that

the Russian Revolution can inspire nothing but disgust owing to the fact that it has produced no great men, and to its lack of big, stirring epic events, in contradistinction to the French Revolution, which was so rich in all these things. It is, therefore, interesting to note what impression the events of the French Revolution produced on impartial foreign contemporary opinion.

We derive one definite impression of the French Revolution by reading Carlyle, or Mignet, or Taine; but the foreign contemporaries who were not themselves mingled in the tragic events received a very different and far more fragmentary series of impressions. Horace Walpole, in his letters, gives us interesting glimpses into the contemporary opinion of the period. At the time of the storming of the Bastille he wrote as follows: "If the Bastille conquers, still is it impossible, considering the general spirit in the country, and the numerous fortified places in France, but some may be seized by the *dissidents*, and whole provinces be torn from the Crown? On the other hand, if the King prevails, what heavy despotism will the *États*, by their want of temper and moderation, have drawn on their country! They might have obtained many capital points, and removed great oppression. No French monarch will ever summon *États* again if this moment has been thrown away." It is interesting to note how doubtful he considers the success of the revolutionaries to be. Again, he adds in the same letter: "One hears of no genius on either side, nor do symptoms of any appear. There will, perhaps; such times and tempests bring forth, at least bring out,

great men. I do not take the Duke of Orleans or Mirabeau to be built "du bois dont on les fait"; no, nor M. Necker. He may be a great traitor if he made the confusion designedly; but it is a woful evasion if the promised financier slips into a black politician." A criticism similar to that passed on Necker I have myself heard applied to Count Witte on several occasions in St. Petersburg.

In July, 1790, he again returns to the charge: "Franklin and Washington were great men. None have appeared yet in France, and Necker has only returned to make a wretched figure. . . . Why, then, does he stay?" This is the question which the *Russ*, the anti-Governmental newspaper, is asking every day in like terms about Count Witte. In August, 1790, he says about the French: "They have settled nothing like a Constitution; on the contrary, they seem to protract everything but violence as much as they can in order to keep their louis a day." This might be applied not without appositeness to certain of the Bureaucrats here. In September, 1791, Horace Walpole is even more pessimistic. He thinks that twenty thousand men could march from one end of France to the other. But he apprehends the possibility of enthusiasm turning to courage against a foreign enemy. What he disbelieves in is a set of "military noble lads, pedantic academicians, curates of villages, and country advocates amidst the utmost confusion and altercation amongst themselves" composing a system of government that would set four and twenty millions of people free. "This, too," he adds, "without one great man amongst them. If they had had, as Mirabeau seemed

to promise to be—but as we know that he was, too, a consummate villain, there would soon have been an end of their vision of liberty. And so there will be still, unless, after a civil war, they split into small kingdoms or commonwealths. A little nation may be free. . . . Millions cannot be so; because, the greater the number of men that are one people, the more vices, the more abuses there are, that will either require or furnish pretexts for restraints." It is plain from the above quotations that whatever contemporary foreign writers thought of the French Revolution there was one thing which they did not think, and that was that the prominent actors in it were big men; or that the whole movement was anything but disgusting and futile.

Later, in 1793, Horace Walpole's horror and disgust, as was natural, knew no bounds. He thinks, moreover, that the proceedings of the French Republicans had wounded the cause of liberty and shaken it for centuries. Now the popular atmosphere of legend that has grown up round the Revolution takes as its keynote a phrase of Victor Hugo's: "Les hommes de 1793 étaient des géants." In Russia we have not got so far as 1793. We are still at the beginning of 1789, and it is quite possible that the future Carlyle who writes the history of this period will say the men of 1905 were giants. The Duma will give opportunities for popular tribunes, and apart from and in contradistinction to great orators or tribunes, it may be doubted whether revolutions, while they are going on, ever produce great men. The great men come afterwards.

But when people point to the seemingly effectual repression that is now taking place here, and ask how

it is possible for the Revolution to continue, they forget that there is a difference—a small but vastly important difference—between the present state of affairs and the period of the late M. Plehve's *régime*. The difference consists in the fact that before the general strike and the October Manifesto, before even the taking of Port Arthur, Prince Mirsky opened a little window in the tight-closed room of Russian politics by relaxing the stringent Press regulations and letting loose public opinion. The light came in like a flood, and nothing can now drive it out. Repression when public opinion was crushed was a very different thing from repression when every case of it is reported in detail in the newspapers, as now happens. For people can say what they like about the unreality or the non-existence of the liberty of the Press; one has only to buy the Radical newspapers to be convinced that if the Press is not free it is certainly more explicit and more unrestrained in its violence than the Press of any other European country, and some of the comic satirical newspapers might have Marat for editor.

Somebody once said that he would have given anything in the world to have half an hour's private interview with the late Lord Beaconsfield with a pistol, and to obtain from him under the threat of death an exact and complete account of his views and convictions. It would be interesting to perform a similar experiment on Count Witte; whatever the result of it might be, I doubt if there would be found a trace of the placid optimism which is sometimes attributed to him. Count Witte may be attacked for many things; he cannot be accused of a lack of clear-sightedness: not, that is,

if he be judged by the utterances which he is known to have made before the outbreak of the war, or by those which he made publicly before entering office, and while the war was still going on. Mirabeau was, in the opinion of Horace Walpole, a ruffian; he was certainly distrusted by both parties, but we know now, though the fact escaped the notice of his contemporaries, that he gauged the forces at work and the probable trend of events with surprising accuracy. We now consider Mirabeau to have been something like a great man. Count Witte has perhaps inspired among all parties a greater distrust than that which was the lot of Mirabeau; but in times such as these clear-sightedness, self-confidence, and capacity for hard work are precious qualities indeed. Nobody denies the possession of these qualities to Count Witte. It is not, therefore, impossible that the future historian may place him in the same niche as Mirabeau in the Pantheon of the world. This, as Horace Walpole says, is speculation, not prophecy. And I revert, or rather arrive, at these conclusions, that a lull in events does not necessarily imply their final cessation; that so far in Russia revolutionary matters have succeeded one another, if anything, with greater rapidity than they did in France, and that what seems to be the unmistakable dawn of revolution to the historian may very well appear to be a false dawn to the contemporary observer; and that, whatever happens, nothing can ever shut the little window which Prince Mirsky opened.

CHAPTER XI

DOSTOIEVSKI'S ANNIVERSARY

ST. PETERSBURG, *February 24th.*

THEY are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the death of Dostoievski, and this fact has brought back to my mind, with great vividness, a conversation I had with the officers of the battery at Jen-tzen-tung last September, and which I have already noted in my diary.

We were sitting in the ante-room of the small Chinese house which formed our quarters. This ante-room, which had paper windows and no doors, a floor of mud, and a table composed of boards laid upon two small tressels, formed our dining-room. We had just finished dinner, and were drinking tea out of pewter cups. Across the courtyard from the part of the dwelling where the Chinese herded together, we could hear the monotonous song of a Chinaman or a Mongol singing over and over to himself the same strophe, which rose by the intervals of a scale more subtle than ours and sank again to die away in the vibrations of one prolonged note, to the accompaniment of a single-stringed instrument.

The conversation had languished. Somebody was

absorbed in a patience, we were talking of books and novels in a vague, desultory fashion, when suddenly Hliebnikov, a young Cossack officer, said: "Who is the greatest writer in the world?" Vague answers were made as to the comparative merits of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Molière, but Hliebnikov impatiently waived all this talk aside. Then turning to me he said: "He knows; there is one writer greater than all of them, and that is Dostoievski."

"Dostoievski!" said the doctor. "Dostoievski's work is like a clinical laboratory or a dissecting-room. There is no sore spot in the human soul into which he does not poke his dirty finger. His characters are either mad or abnormal. His books are those of a madman, and can only be appreciated by people who are half mad themselves."

The young Cossack officer did not bother to discuss the question. He went out into the night in disgust. We continued the argument for a short time. "There is not a single character," said the doctor, "in all Dostoievski's books who is normal." The doctor was a cultivated man, and seeing that we differed we agreed to differ, and we talked of other things, but I was left wondering why Hliebnikov was so convinced that Dostoievski was the greatest of all writers, and why he knew I should agree with him. I have been thinking this over ever since, and in a sense I do agree with Hliebnikov. I think that Dostoievski is the greatest writer that has ever lived, if by a great writer is meant a man whose work, message, or whatever you like to call it, can do the greatest good, can afford the greatest consolation to poor humanity. If we mean

by the greatest writer the greatest artist, the most powerful magician, who can bid us soar like Shelley or Schubert into the seventh heaven of melody, or submerge us like Wagner beneath heavy seas until we drown with pleasure, or touch and set all the fibres of our associations and our æsthetic appreciation vibrating with incommunicable rapture by the magic of wonderful phrases like Virgil or Keats, or strike into our very heart with a divine sword like Sappho, Catullus, Heine, or Burns, or ravish us by the blend of pathos and nobility of purpose with faultless diction like Leopardi, Gray, and Racine, or bid us understand and feel the whole burden of mankind in a thin thread of notes like Beethoven or in a few simple words like Goethe, or evoke for us the whole pageant of life like Shakespeare to the sound of Renaissance flutes, or all Heaven and Hell like Dante, by "thoughts that breathe and words that burn"?

If we are thinking of all these miraculous achievements when we say a great writer or the greatest writer, then we must not name Dostoievski. Dostoievski is not of these; in his own province, that of the novelist, he is as a mere workman, a mere craftsman, one of the worst, inferior to any French or English ephemeral writer of the day you like to mention; but, on the other hand, if we mean by a great writer a man who has given to mankind an inestimable boon, a priceless gift, a consolation, a help to life, which nothing can equal or replace, then Dostoievski is a great writer, and perhaps the greatest writer that has ever lived. I mean that if the Holy Scriptures were destroyed and no trace were left of them in the world, the books

where mankind, bereft of its Divine and inestimable treasure, would find the nearest approach to the supreme message of comfort would be the books of Dostoievski.

Dostoievski is not an artist; his stories and his books are put together and shaped anyhow. The surroundings and the circumstances in which he places his characters are fantastic and impossible to the verge of absurdity. The characters themselves are also often impossible and fantastic to the verge of absurdity; yet they are vivid in a way no other characters are vivid, and alive, not only so that we perceive and recognise their outward appearance, but so that we know the innermost corners of their souls. His characters, it is said, are abnormal. One of his principal figures is a murderer who kills an old woman from ambition to be like Napoleon, and put himself above the law; another is a victim to epileptic fits. But the fact should be borne in mind that absolutely normal people, like absolutely happy nations, have no history; that since the whole of humanity is suffering and groaning beneath the same burden of life, the people who in literature are the most important to mankind are not the most normal, but those who are made of the most complex machinery and of the most receptive wax, and who are thus able to receive and to record the deepest and most varied impressions. And in the same way as Job and David are more important to humanity than George I. or Louis-Philippe, so are Hamlet and Falstaff more important than Tom Jones and Mr. Bultitude. And the reason of this is not because Hamlet and Falstaff are abnormal

—although compared with Tom Jones they are abnormal—but because they are human: more profoundly human, and more widely human. Hamlet has been read, played, and understood by succeeding generations in various countries and tongues, in innumerable different and contradictory fashions; but in each country, at each period, and in each tongue, he has been understood by his readers or his audience, according to their lights, because in him they have seen a reflection of themselves, because in themselves they have found an echo of Hamlet. The fact that audiences, actors, readers, and commentators have all interpreted Hamlet in utterly contradictory ways testifies not merely to the profound humanity of the character but to its multiplicity and manysidedness. Every human being recognises in himself something of Hamlet and something of Falstaff; but every human being does not necessarily recognise in himself something of Tom Jones or Mr. Bultitude. At least what in these characters resembles him is so like himself that he cannot notice the likeness; it consists in the broad elementary facts of being a human being; but when he hears Hamlet or Falstaff philosophising or making jokes on the riddle of life he is suddenly made conscious that he has gone through the same process himself in the same way.

So it is with Dostoievski. Dostoievski's characters are mostly abnormal, but it is in their very abnormality that we recognise their profound and poignant humanity and a thousand human traits that we ourselves share. And in showing us humanity at its acutest, at its intensest pitch of suffering, at the soul's lowest depth of

degradation, or highest summit of aspiration, he makes us feel his comprehension, pity, and love for everything that is in us, so that we feel that there is nothing which we could think or experience; no sensation, no hope, no ambition, no despair, no disappointment, no regret, no greatness, no meanness that he would not understand; no wound, no sore for which he would not have just the very balm and medicine which we need. Pity and love are the chief elements of the work of Dostoievski—pity such as King Lear felt on the heath; and just as the terrible circumstances in which King Lear raves and wanders make his pity all the greater and the more poignant in its pathos, so do the fantastic, nightmarish circumstances in which Dostoievski's characters live make their humanness more poignant, their love more lovable, their pity more piteous.

A great writer should see "life steadily and see life whole." Dostoievski does not see the whole of life steadily, like Tolstoi, for instance, but he sees the soul of man whole, and perhaps he sees more deeply into it than any other writer has done. He shrinks from nothing. He sees the "soul of goodness in things evil": not exclusively the evil, like Zola; nor does he evade the evil like many of our writers. He sees and pities it. And this is why his work is great. He writes about the saddest things that can happen; the most melancholy, the most hopeless, the most terrible things in the world; but his books do not leave us with a feeling of despair; on the contrary, his own "sweet reasonableness," the pity and love with which they are filled are like balm. We are left with a belief in some

great inscrutable goodness, and his books act upon us as once his conversation did on a fellow prisoner whom he met on the way to Siberia. The man was on the verge of suicide; but after Dostoievski had talked to him for an hour—we may be sure there was no sermonising in that talk—he felt able to go on, to live even with perpetual penal servitude before him. To some people, Dostoievski's books act in just this way, and it is, therefore, not odd that they think him the greatest of all writers.

CHAPTER XII

THE POLITICAL PARTIES

MOSCOW, *March 11th.*

THE political parties which are now crystallising themselves are the result of the Liberal movement which began in the twenties, and proceeded steadily until the beginning of the war in 1904, when the Liberal leaders resolved, for patriotic reasons, to mark time and wait. This cessation of hostilities did not last long, and the disasters caused by the war produced so universal a feeling of discontent that the liberation movement was automatically set in motion once more.

On the 19th of June, 1905, a deputation of the United Zemstva, at the head of which was Prince S. N. Troubetzkoi, was received by the Emperor. Prince Troubetzkoi, in a historic speech, expressed with the utmost frankness and directness the imperative need of sweeping reform and of the introduction of national representation. The coalition of the Zemstva formed the first political Russian party, but it was not until after the great strike, and the granting of the Manifesto in October, that parties of different shades came into existence and took definite shape. During the month which followed the Manifesto the process of

crystallisation of parties began, and is still continuing, and they can now roughly be divided into three categories—Right, Centre, and Left, the Right being the extreme Conservatives, the Centre the Constitutional Monarchists, and the Left consisting of two wings, the Constitutional Democrats on the right and the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries on the left. Of these the most important is the party of the Constitutional Democrats, nicknamed the "Cadets." "Cadets" means "K.D.," the word "Constitutional" being spelt with a "K" in Russian, and as the letter "K" in the Russian alphabet has the same sound as it has in French, the result is a word which sounds exactly like the French word "Cadet." Similarly, Social Revolutionaries are nicknamed "S.R.'s" and the Social Democrats "S.D.'s."

In order to understand the origin of the Constitutional Democrats one must understand the part played by the Zemstva. In 1876 a group of County Councillors, or Zemstvoists, under the leadership of M. Petrunkevitch devoted themselves to the task of introducing reforms in the economical condition of Russia. In 1894 their representatives, headed by M. Rodichev, were summarily sent about their business, after putting forward a few moderate demands. In 1902 these men formed with others a "League of Liberation." M. Schipov tried to unite these various "Zemstva" in a common organisation, and some of the members of the Liberation League, while co-operating with them, started a separate organisation called the Zemstvo Constitutionalists. Among the members of this group were names which are well known in Russia, such as Prince

Dolgoroukov, MM. Stachovitch, Kokoshkin, and Lvov. But these "Zemstvoists" formed only a small group; what they needed, in order to represent thinking Russia, was to be united with the professional classes. In November, 1904, the various professions began to group themselves together in political bodies. Various political unions were formed, such as those of the engineers, doctors, lawyers, and schoolmasters. Then Professor Milioukov, one of the leading pioneers of the Liberal movement, whose name is well known in Europe and America, united all professional unions into a great "Union of Unions," which represented the great mass of educated Russia. Before the great strike in October, 1905, he created, together with the best of his colleagues, a new political party, which united the mass of professional opinion with the small group of Zemstvo leaders. He had recognised the fact that the Zemstvoists were the only men who had any political experience, and that they could do nothing without enrolling the professional class. Therefore it is owing to Professor Milioukov that the experienced Zemstvo leaders in October had the whole rank and file of the middle class behind them, and the Constitutional Democrats, as they are at present, represent practically the whole "Intelligenzia," or professional class, of Russia. This party is the only one which is seriously and practically organised. This being so, it is the most important of the political parties.

Those of the Right have not enough followers to give them importance, and those of the Left have announced their intention of boycotting the elections. These various parties are now preparing for the elections.

We are experiencing now the suspense of an *entr'acte* before the curtain rises once more on the next act of the revolutionary drama. This will probably occur when the Duma meets in April. People of all parties seem to be agreed as to one thing, that the present state of things cannot last. There is at present a reaction against reaction. After the disorders here in December many people were driven to the Right; now the reactionary conduct of the Government has driven them back to the Left.

So many people have been arrested lately that there is no longer room for them in prison. An influential political leader said to me yesterday that a proof of the incompetence of the police was that they had not foreseen the armed rising in December, whereas every one else had foreseen it. "And now," he said, "they have been, so to speak, let loose on the paths of repression; old papers and old cases, sometimes of forty years ago, are raked up, and people are arrested for no reason except that the old machine, which is broken and thoroughly out of order, has been set working with renewed energy." The following conversation is related to me—if it is not true (and I am convinced that it is not true) it is typical—as having taken place between a Minister and his subordinate:—

The Subordinate: There are so many people in prison that there is no possibility of getting in another man. The prisons are packed, yet arrests are still being made. What are we to do? Where are these people to be put?

The Minister: We must let some of the prisoners out

The Subordinate: How many?

The Minister: Say five thousand.

The Subordinate: Why five thousand?

The Minister: A nice even number.

The Subordinate: But how? Which? How shall we choose them?

The Minister: Let out any five thousand. What does it matter to them? Any five thousand will be as pleased as any other to be let out.

It is interesting to note that last November the Minister of the Interior was reported to have said that if he could be given a free hand to arrest twenty thousand "intellectuals," he would stop the revolution. The twenty thousand have been arrested, but the revolution has not been stopped.

So far, in spite of the many manifestoes, no guarantee of a Constitution has been granted. The Emperor has, it is true, declared that he will fulfil the promises made in his declaration of the 17th of October, and it is true that if these promises were fulfilled, the result would be Constitutional Government. But at the same time he declared that his absolute power remained intact. At first sight this appears to be a contradiction in terms; but, as the Power which granted the Manifesto of October 17th was autocratic and unlimited, and as it made no mention of the future limiting of itself, it is now, as a matter of fact, not proceeding contrarily to any of its promises. The liberties which were promised may only have been meant to be temporary. They could be withdrawn at any moment, since the Emperor's autocratic power remained. The Manifesto might only have been a sign of goodwill of the Emperor towards his people. It promised certain things, but

gave no guarantee as to the fulfilment of these promises. The whole of Russia, it is true, understood it otherwise. The whole of Russia understood when this Manifesto was published that a Constitution had been promised, and that autocracy was in future to be limited. What Count Witte understood by it, it is difficult to say. Whether he foresaw or not that this Manifesto by its vagueness would one day mean much less than it did then, or whether he only realised this at the same time that he realised that the Conservative element was much stronger than it was thought to be, it is impossible to determine. The fact remains that the Emperor has not withdrawn anything; he has merely not done what he never said he would do, namely, voluntarily abdicate his autocratic power.

The Conservatives are opposed to any such proceeding; not in the same way as the extreme reactionaries, some of whom relegated the portrait of the Emperor to the scullery on the day of the Manifesto from sheer Conservative principle, but because they say that if the autocratic power is destroyed the peasant population will be convulsed, and the danger will be immense. To this Liberals—all liberal-minded men, not revolutionaries—reply that this supposed danger is a delusion of the Conservatives, who have unconsciously invented the fact to support their theory and have not based their theory on the fact; that many peasants clearly understand and recognise that there is to be a constitutional *régime* in Russia; that if this danger does exist, the risk incurred by it must be taken; that in any case it is the lesser of two evils, less dangerous than the maintenance of the autocracy.

Count Witte's opponents on the Liberal side say that the course of events up to this moment has been deliberately brought about by Count Witte; that he disbelieved and disbelieves in Constitutional Government for Russia; that he provoked disorder in order to crush the revolutionary element; that the Moderate parties played into his hands by not meeting him with a united front; that, Duma or no Duma, he intends everything to remain as before and the power to be in his hands. What his supporters say I do not know, because I have never seen one in the flesh, but I have seen many people who say that what has happened so far has been brought about with infinite skill and knowledge of the elements with which he had to deal. Further, they add that Count Witte has no principles and no convictions; that he has always accommodated himself to the situation of the moment, and worked in harmony with the men of the moment, whatever they were; that he has no belief in the force or the stability of any movement in Russia; that he trusts the Russian character to simmer down after it has violently fizzed; that he intends to outstay the fizzing period; that he has a great advantage in the attitude of the Moderate parties, who, although they do not trust him, play into his hands by disagreeing on small points and not meeting him with clear and definite opposition. They add, however, that he has miscalculated and wrongly gauged the situation this time, because the simmering down period will only be temporary and the fizzing will be renewed again with increasing violence, until either the cork flies into space or the bottle is burst. The cork is autocracy, the bottle

Russia, and the mineral water the revolution. The corkscrew was the promise of a Constitution with which the cork was partially loosened, only to be screwed down again by Count Witte's powerful hand.

Among all the parties the most logical seem to be the Extreme Conservatives and the Extreme Radicals. The Extreme Conservatives have said all along that the talk of a Constitution was nonsensical, and the Manifesto of October 17th a great betrayal; that the only result of it has been disorder, riot, and bloodshed. They are firmly based on a principle. The Extreme Radicals are equally firmly based on a principle, namely, that the autocratic *régime* must be done away with at all costs, and that until it is swept away and a Constitution based on universal suffrage takes its place there is no hope for Russia. Therefore the danger that the Moderate parties may eventually be submerged and the two extremes be left face to face, still exists. As a great quantity of the Radicals are in prison they are for the time being less perceptible; but this era of repression cannot last, and it has already created a reaction against itself. But then the question arises, what will happen when it stops? What will happen when the valve on which the police have been sitting is released?

The influential political leader with whom I dined last night, and who is one of the leading members of the party of October 17th, said that there was not a man in Russia who believed in Witte, that Witte was a man who had no convictions. I asked why he himself and other Zemstvo leaders had refused to take part in the administration directly after the Manifesto

had been issued, when posts in the Cabinet were offered to them. He said their terms had been that the Cabinet should be exclusively formed of Liberal leaders; but they did not choose to serve in company with a man like Durnovo, with whom he would refuse to shake hands.

He added that it would not have bettered their position in the country with regard to the coming Duma, which he was convinced would be Liberal. Talking of the Constitutional Democrats he said they were really republicans but did not dare own it.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE COUNTRY

SOSNOFKA, GOVERNMENT OF TAMBOV,
March 25th.

WHEN one has seen a thing which had hitherto been vaguely familiar suddenly illuminated by a flood of light, making it real, living, and vivid, it is difficult to recall one's old state of mind before the inrush of the illuminating flood; and still more difficult to discuss that thing with people who have not had the opportunity of illumination. The experience is similar to that which a child feels when, after having worshipped a certain writer of novels or tales, and wondered why he was not acknowledged by the whole world to be the greatest author that has ever been, he grows up, and by reading other books, sees the old favourite in a new light, the light of fresh horizons opened by great masterpieces; in this new light the old favourite seems to be a sorry enough impostor, his golden glamour has faded to tinsel. The grown-up child will now with difficulty try to discover what was the cause and secret of his old infatuation, and every now and then he will receive a shock on hearing some fellow grown-up person talk of the former

idol in the same terms as he would have talked of him when a child, the reason being that this second person has never got farther; has never reached the illuminating light of new horizons. So it is with many things; and so it is in my case with Russia. I find it extremely difficult to recall exactly what I thought Russia was before I had been there; and I find Russia difficult to describe to those who have never been there. There is so much when one has been there that becomes so soon a matter of course that it no longer strikes one, but which to the newcomer is probably striking.

The first time I came to Russia I travelled straight to the small village where I am now staying. What did I imagine Russia to be like? All I can think of now is that there was a big blank in my mind. I had read translations of Russian books, but they had left no definite picture or landscape in my mind; I had read some books about Russia and got from them very definite pictures of a fantastic country, which proved to be curiously unlike Russia in every respect. A country where feudal castles, Pevenseys and Hurstmonceuxs, loomed in a kind of Rhine-land covered with snow, inhabited by mute, inglorious Bismarcks, and Princesses who carried about dynamite in their cigarette-cases and wore bombs in their tiaras; Princesses who owed much of their being to Ouida, and some of it to Sardou.

Then everything in these books was so gloriously managed; everybody was so efficient, so powerful; the Bismarcks so Machiavellian and so mighty; the Princesses so *splendide mendaces.* The background was

also gorgeous, barbaric, crowded with Tartars and Circassians, blazing with scimitars, pennons, armour, and sequins, like a scene in a Drury Lane pantomime; and every now and then a fugitive household would gallop in the snow through a primæval forest, throwing their children to the wolves, so as to escape being devoured themselves. This, I think, was the impression of Russia which I derived before I went there from reading French and English fiction about Russia, from Jules Verne's "Michel Strogoff," and from memories of many melodramas. Then came the impressions received from reading Russian books, which were again totally different from this melodramatic atmosphere.

From Russian novels I derived a clear idea of certain types of men who drank tea out of a samovar and drove forty versts in a vehicle called a *Tarantass*. I made the acquaintance of all kinds of people, who were as real to me as living acquaintances; of Natascha and Levine, and Pierre and Anna Karenine, and Basaroff, and Dolly, and many others. But I never saw their setting clearly, I never realised their background, and I used to see them move before a French or German background. Then I saw the real thing, and it was utterly and totally different from my imaginations and my expectations. But now when I try to give the slightest sketch of what the country is really like the old difficulty presents itself; the difficulty which arises from talking of a thing of which one has a clear idea to people who have a vague and probably false idea of the reality. The first thing one can safely say is this: eliminate all

notions of castles, Rhine country, feudal keeps, and stone houses in general. Think of an endless plain, a sheet of dazzling snow in winter, an ocean of golden corn in summer, a tract of brown earth in autumn, and now in the earliest days of spring an expanse of white melting snow, with great patches of brown earth and sometimes green grass appearing at intervals, and further patches of half-melted snow of a steely-grey colour, sometimes blue as they catch the reflection of the dazzling sky in the sunlight. In the distance on one side the plain stretches to infinity, on the other you may see the delicate shapes of a brown, leafless wood, the outlines soft in the haze. If I had to describe Russia in three words I should say a plain, a windmill, and a church. The church is made of wood, and is built in Byzantine style, with a small cupola and a minaret. It is painted red and white, or white and pale-green. Sometimes the cupola is gilt.

The plain is dotted with villages, and one village is very like another. They consist generally of two rows of houses, forming what does duty for a street, but the word street would be as misleading as possible in this case. It would be more exact to say an exceedingly broad expanse of earth: dusty in summer, and in spring and autumn a swamp of deep soaking black mud. The houses, at irregular intervals, sometimes huddled close together, sometimes with wide gaps between them, succeed each other (the gaps probably caused by the fact that the houses which were there have been burnt). They are made of logs, thatched with straw; sometimes (but rarely) they are made of bricks and roofed with

iron. As a rule they look as if they had been built by Robinson Crusoe. The road is strewn with straw and rich in abundance of every kind of mess. Every now and then there is a well of the primitive kind which we see on the banks of the Nile, and which one imagines to be of the same pattern as those from which the people in the Old Testament drew their water. The roads are generally peopled with peasants driving at a leisurely walk in winter in big wooden sledges and in summer in big wooden carts. Often the cart is going on by itself with somebody in the extreme distance every now and then grunting at the horse. A plain, a village, a church, every now and then a wood of birch-trees, every now and then a stream, a weir; and a broken-down lock. A great deal of dirt, a great deal of moisture. An overwhelming feeling of space and leisureliness, a sense that nothing you could say or do could possibly hurry anybody or anything, or make the lazy, creaking wheels of life go faster—that is, I think, the picture which arises first in my mind when I think of the Russian country.

Then as to the people. With regard to these, there is one fact of capital importance which must be borne in mind. The people if you know the language and if you don't are two separate things. The first time I went to Russia I did not know a word of the language, and, though certain facts were obvious with regard to the people, I found it a vastly different thing when I could talk to them myself. So different that I am persuaded that those who wish to study this country and do not know the language are wasting their time, and might with greater profit study the suburbs of London or the

Isle of Man. And here again a fresh difficulty arises. All the amusing things one hears said in this country, all that is characteristic and smells of the Russian land, all that is peculiarly Russian, is like everything which is peculiarly anything, peculiarly English, Irish, Italian, or Turkish, untranslatable, and loses all its savour and point in translation. This is especially true with regard to the Russian language, which is rich in peculiar phrases and locutions, diminutives, and terms which range over a whole scale of delicate shades of endearment and familiarity, such as "little pigeon," "little father," &c., and these phrases translated into any other language lose all their meaning. However, the main impression I received when I first came to Russia, and the impression which I received from the Russian soldiers with whom I mingled in Manchuria in the war, the impression which is now the strongest with regard to them is that of *humaneness*. Those who read in the newspapers of acts of brutality and ferocity, of houses set on fire and pillaged, of huge massacres of Jews, of ruthless executions and arbitrary imprisonments, will rub their eyes perhaps and think that I must be insane. It is true, nevertheless. A country which is in a state of revolution is no more in its normal condition than a man when he is intoxicated. If a man is soaked in alcohol and then murders his wife and children and sets his house on fire, it does not necessarily prove that he is not a humane member of society. He may be as gentle as a dormouse and as timid as a hare by nature. His excitement and demented behaviour are merely artificial. It seems to me now that the whole of Russia at this moment is like an

intoxicated man; a man inebriated after starvation, and passing from fits of frenzy to sullen stupor. The truth of this has been illustrated by things which have lately occurred in the country. Peasants who have looted the spirit stores and destroyed every house within reach have repented with tears on the next day.

The peasants have an infinite capacity for pity and remorse, and therefore the more violent their outbreaks of fury the more bitter is their remorse. A peasant has been known to worry himself almost to death, as if he had committed a terrible crime, because he had smoked a cigarette before receiving the Blessed Sacrament. If they can feel acute remorse for such things, much more acute will it be if they set houses on fire or commit similar outrages. If you talk to a peasant for two minutes you will notice that he has a fervent belief in a great, good, and inscrutable Providence. He never accuses man of the calamities to which flesh is heir. When the railway strike was at its height, and we were held up at a small side station, the train attendant repeated all day long that God had sent us a severe trial, which He had. Yesterday I had a talk with a man who had returned from the war; he had been a soldier and a surgeon's assistant, and had received the Cross of St. George for rescuing a wounded officer under fire. I asked him if he had been wounded. He said, "No, my clothes were not even touched; men all around me were wounded. This was the ordinance of God. God had pity on the orphan's tears. It was all pre-arranged thus that I was to come home. So it was to be." I also had tea with a stonemason yesterday who

said to me, "I and my whole family have prayed for you in your absence because these are times of trouble, and we did not know what bitter cup you might not have to drink." Then he gave me three new-laid eggs with which to eat his very good health.

March 29th.

To-day I went out riding through the leafless woods and I saw one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen, a sight peculiarly characteristic of Russian landscape. We passed a small river that up to now has been frozen, but the thaw has come and with it the floods of spring. The whole valley as seen from the higher slopes of the woods was a sheet of shining water. Beyond it in the distance was a line of dark-brown woods. The water was grey, with gleaming layers in it reflecting the white clouds and the blue sky; and on it the bare trees seemed to float and rise like delicate ghosts, casting clearly defined brown reflections. The whole place had a look of magic and enchantment about it, as if out of the elements of the winter, out of the snow and the ice and the leafless boughs, the spring had devised and evoked a silvery pageant to celebrate its resurrection.

MOSCOW, *April 6th.*

I have spent twelve instructive days in the country; instructive, because I was able to obtain some first-hand glimpses into the state of the country, into the actual frame of mind of the peasants; and the peasants are the obscure and hidden factor which will ultimately decide the fate of Russian political life. It is difficult to

get at the peasants; it is exceedingly difficult to get them to speak their mind. You can do so by travelling with them in a third-class carriage, because then they seem to regard one as a fleeting shadow of no significance which will soon vanish into space. However, I saw peasants; I heard them discuss the land question and the manner in which they proposed to buy their landlords' property. I also had some interesting talks with a man who had lived among the peasants for years. From him and from others I gathered that their attitude at present was chiefly one of expectation. They are waiting to see how things turn out. They were continually asking my chief informant whether anything would come of the "levelling" (*Ravnienie*); this is, it appears, what they call the revolutionary movement. It is extremely significant that they look upon this as a process of equalisation. The land question in Russia is hopelessly complicated; it is about ten times as complicated as the land question in Ireland, and of the same nature. I had glimpses of this complexity. The village where I was staying was divided into four "societies"; each of these societies was willing to purchase so much land, but when the matter was definitely settled with regard to one society two representatives of two-thirds of that society appeared and stated that they were "Old Souls" (*i.e.*, they had since the abolition of serfage a separate arrangement), and wished to purchase the lands separately in order to avoid its partition; upon which the representatives of the whole society said that this was impossible, and that they were the majority. The "Old Souls" retorted finally that

a general meeting should be held, and then it would be seen that the majority was in favour of them. They were in a minority; and in spite of the speciousness of their arguments it was difficult to see how the majority, whose interests were contrary to those of the "Old Souls," could be persuaded to support them. This is only one instance out of many.

Another element of complication is that the peasants who can earn their living by working on the landlords' land are naturally greatly averse from anything like a complete sale of it, and are alarmed by the possibility of such an idea. Also there is a class of peasants who work in factories, and therefore are only interested in the land inasmuch as profit can be derived from it while it belongs to the landlord. Again, there are others who are without land, who need land, and who are too poor to buy it. If all the land were given to them as a present to-morrow the result in the long run would be deplorable, because the quality of the land—once you eliminate the landlord and his more advanced methods—would gradually deteriorate and poverty would merely be spread over a larger area. One fact is obvious: that many of the peasants have not got enough land, and to them land is now being sold by a great number of landlords. To settle the matter further, a radical scheme of agrarian reform is necessary; many such schemes are being elaborated at this moment, but those which have seen the light up to the present have so far proved a source of universal disagreement. The fact which lies at the root of the matter is of course that if the land question is to be solved the peasant

must be educated to adopt fresher methods of agriculture than those which were employed in the Garden of Eden; methods which were doubtless excellent until the fall of man rendered the cultivation of the soil a matter of painful duty, instead of pleasant recreation.

I asked my friend who had lived among the peasants and studied them for years what they thought of things in general. He said that in this village they had never been inclined to loot (looting can always arise from the gathering together of six drunken men), that they are perfectly conscious of what is happening (my friend is one of the most impartial and fair-minded men alive); they are distrustful and they say little; but they *know*. As we were talking of these things I mentioned the fact that a statement I had made in print about the peasants in this village and in Russia generally reading Milton's "Paradise Lost" had been received with interest in England and in some quarters with incredulity. It was in this very village and from the same friend, who had been a teacher there for more than twenty years, that I first heard of this. It was afterwards confirmed by my own experience.

"Who denies it?" he asked. "Russians or Englishmen?" "Englishmen," I answered. "But why?" he said. "I have only read it myself once long ago, but I should have thought that it was obvious that such a work would be likely to make a strong impression."

I explained that at first sight it appeared to Englishmen incredible that Russian peasants, who were known

to be so backward in many things, should have taken a fancy to a work which was considered as a touchstone of rare literary taste in England. I alluded to the difficulties of the classicism of the style—the scholarly quality of the verse.

"But is it written in verse?" he asked. And when I explained to him that "Paradise Lost" was as literary a work as the Æneid he perfectly understood the incredulity of the English public. As a matter of fact, it is not at all difficult to understand and even to explain why the Russian peasant likes "Paradise Lost." It is popular in exactly the same way as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" has always been popular in England. Was it not Dr. Johnson who said that Bunyan's work was great because, while it appealed to the most refined critical palate, it was understood and enjoyed by the simplest of men, by babes and sucklings? This remark applies to the case of "Paradise Lost" and the Russian peasant. The fact therefore is not surprising, as would be, for instance, the admiration of Tommy Atkins for a translation of Lucretius. It is no more and no less surprising than the popularity of Bunyan or of any epic story or fairy tale. When people laugh and say that these tastes are the inventions of essayists they forget that the epics of the world were the supply resulting from the demand caused by the deeply-rooted desire of human nature for stories—long stories of heroic deeds in verse; the further you go back the more plainly this demand and supply is manifest. Therefore in Russia among the peasants, a great many of whom cannot read, the desire for epics is strong at this

moment. And those who can read prefer an epic tale to a modern novel.

Besides this, "Paradise Lost" appeals to the peasants because it is not only epic, full of fantasy and episode, but also because it is religious, and, like children, they prefer a story to be true. In countries where few people read or write, memory flourishes, and in Russian villages there are regular tellers of fairy tales (*skashi*) who hand down from generation to generation fairy tales of incredible length in prose and in verse.

But to return to my friend the schoolmaster. I asked him if "Paradise Lost" was still popular in the village. "Yes," he answered, "they come and ask me for it every year. Unfortunately," he added, "I may not have it in the school library as it is not on the list of books which are allowed by the censor. It is not forbidden; but it is not on the official list of books for school use." Then he said that after all his experience the taste of the peasants in literature baffled him. "They will not read modern stories," he said. "When I ask them why they like 'Paradise Lost' they point to their heart and say, 'It is near to the heart; it speaks; you read and a sweetness comes to you.' Gogol they do not like. On the other hand they ask for a strange book of adventures, about a Count or a Baron." "Baron Munchausen?" I suggested. "No," he said, "a Count." "Not Monte Cristo?" I asked. "Yes," he said, "that is it. And what baffles me more than all is that they like Dostoievski's 'Letters from a Dead House.'" (Dostoievski's record of his life in prison in Siberia.) Their taste does not to me personally seem to be so baffling. As for Dostoievski's book, I am

certain they recognise its great truth, and they feel the sweetness and simplicity of the writer's character, and this "speaks" to them also. As for "Monte Cristo," is not the beginning of it epical? It was a mistake, he said, to suppose the peasants were unimaginative. Sometimes this was manifested in a curious manner. There was a peasant who was well known as a great drunkard. In one of his fits of drink he imagined that he had sold his wife to the "Tzar of Turkey," and that at midnight her head must be cut off. As the hour drew near he wept bitterly, said goodbye to his wife, and fetching an axe said with much lamentation that this terrible deed had to be done because he had promised her life to the "Tzar of Turkey." The neighbours eventually interfered and stopped the execution.

When one is searching for curious types it generally happens that you find one under your very nose. This was my case the other day. There is in the village another school which has lately been built for the factory children by the Government. I strolled into it and was received by a young schoolmaster with long black hair who was conducting, in the same room, three separate classes of children of different ages, to which he was respectively and simultaneously teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic (*i.e.*, reading to one class, writing to the second, and arithmetic to the third). In the interval between two lessons he took me into his room and talked. His room was next to the school-room. It was like the school, made of oak boards, neither papered nor carpeted. There was no furniture in his sitting-room, except a tiny table and a stool, and

in a further room no furniture at all except a violin on the floor. The Government had given the wood with which to build the school, he said; and when it arrived the peasants whose children were to go to the school had begun to saw and build, and then had refused to go on with the work. However, it was eventually built. "Who supports it? "I asked. "Well," he answered, "at present the Government have no funds for schools, and the peasants refuse to pay for it, so I have to support it myself. The expenses are not great." His salary consists of £36 a year, out of which he supplies the school-books and paper, pens, &c. He seemed to like his work and to take a great interest in the peasants. "The factory peasants are far more developed than the ordinary peasants," he said. "Some of them take an interest in astronomy. But the peasants are dark people, difficult to get to know, and infinitely cunning." "Do you play the violin?" I asked, pointing to the violin case. "Yes," he answered, "but I don't know how I play." I have never seen so poignant a symbol of loneliness and the absence of the comforts of life as this young schoolmaster in his bare wooden room. He seemed, however, perfectly cheerful, and said that his present situation was a great improvement on the last one, which had been a mastership in a school near Morshansk, where he slept in the same room as forty other people, and where in winter the atmosphere was so thick at night that they had to open the door. To this the bare room with the violin on the floor seemed indeed preferable.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ELECTIONS

MOSCOW, *March 19th.*

"PUBLIC affairs," Dr. Johnson once said, "vex no man." And when Boswell objected that he had seen Dr. Johnson vexed on this account the sage replied thus: "Sir, I have never slept an hour less, nor ate an ounce less meat. I would have knocked the factious dogs on the head, to be sure; but I was not vexed." This seems to me to be an exact definition of the attitude of the Russian public towards politics at this moment. They are not vexed, but they are anxious to knock the factious dogs on the head. The trouble is that each party considers the other parties to be the factious dogs, and the Government considers nearly all the parties to be factious dogs; and all parties without exception (Radical, Extreme, and Conservative) consider the Government to be a factious dog. I will describe briefly the present position of principal parties and their more important sub-divisions.

The Right (the monarchical party and the Alliance of Russian People) is for the Throne and the Altar and against all compromise. They consider constitu-

tional promises to have been exacted by the terrorism of factious dogs.

In the Centre there are, slightly towards the Right, the party of Law and Order, the party of Commerce and Industry, and slightly veering towards the Left the Alliance of October 17th. At this moment the two branches I have mentioned first (Law and Order and Commerce and Industry) have veered from the Right towards the Left; they say that the Government is their common enemy. However, the main fact with regard to them is that these three branches of the Centre, of which the Alliance of October 17th is far the most important, are all constitutional and all moderate. There are further sub-divisions in the Centre about which we need not trouble ourselves.

These three parties are united in desiring the preservation of the Monarchy on a thoroughly constitional basis and that of the Unity of the Empire. They differ on various other questions. The Alliance of October 17th is in favour of universal suffrage.

The Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets, are in favour of universal suffrage, local autonomy for Poland (which they wish placed in the same position as Finland), and one Chamber. They say nothing of the Monarchy. They are a very strong and active party, and their leaders are notable men, such as Professor Milioukov, MM. Struve, Rodichev, and Petrunkevitch, nearly all of whom are brilliant orators. The Government has been so active in repressive measures against this party that it is difficult to foresee how strongly they will be represented in the Duma. The Moderate

parties accuse them of promising more than they can give and of saying less than they mean; in fact, of being Federalists and Socialists in disguise, and not having the honesty and the courage to admit the fact for fear of arousing hostility among the peasants. On the Left of the Left are the Socialists, the Social-Democrats, and the Social-Revolutionaries.

The elections are taking place now. I tried during the whole of yesterday to grasp thoroughly the working of the franchise law. I failed to grasp it. I asked one Russian how many degrees there were in the suffrage. He said four. I asked another; he said three. I asked a third; he said two.

However, what has happened in twenty-five Governments as far as the peasants are concerned is this: the peasants have elected delegates for their districts. Each district elects a delegate. The delegate elects an elector and the elector elects the member. That is one part of the process. Three degrees. The result of these elections was that out of 222 districts in 23 Ouiezds 99 districts elected supporters of the Government, and 123 more or less Progressive candidates. Yesterday the small landed proprietors elected their representatives in the Government of Moscow; out of 100 candidates returned 20 Constitutional Democrats only were elected. Yesterday also, in St. Petersburg, elections were held among the working men of the factories. This led to nothing, since the working men boycotted the proceedings.

The first peasant who was chosen as a delegate for his district in the Government of Moscow was arrested on the 13th inst. It happened like this: The peasants

met to elect a representative. Amongst them there was one man who, without having any definite political convictions, was able to make a fair speech. He was unanimously elected. The police, who were present, confronted with this apparently unforeseen contingency (that some one would be elected), and in doubt as to what to do, arrested him. He protested, saying that he had been unanimously chosen as the people's delegate. "Oh!" said the police, "you are a *kreekòon*, are you? The Circular of the Minister of the Interior tells us to arrest all *kreekòons;* to prison you go." A *kreekòon* means a person who is turbulent, who cries out, objects, or makes any kind of disturbance. So arrested he was. The peasants, left without a candidate, thought that this time they would elect some one who could not possibly be accused of being a *kreekòon*, so they chose a very old man over ninety years of age. This man, although admirably fitted by the suavity of his demeanour to fulfil the necessary conditions, could neither read nor write, nor even hold a pen so as to scratch his mark. So he was disqualified. In his place another octogenarian, who still had strength enough left in his palsied fingers to scratch a mark on paper, was chosen. In other districts the peasants, hearing of this proceeding, elected the village elder or the policeman so as to avoid possible trouble. This, however, is against the rules, so they had to fall back on octogenarians. In mills and factories the employers encourage this plan so as to avoid friction with the authorities. It is perhaps fair to add that the elections are probably not in all cases so farcical as they are made out to be. But in one case some workmen who wished to boycott the elections

and were frightened into voting elected a man who was deaf and dumb.

The general feeling prevails that the Duma, whatever the result of the elections may be, will be a profoundly unsatisfactory machine. The Socialists look upon the situation with hope. They say that the Duma will either be red, in which case it will be dissolved by the Government; or black, in which case it will be destroyed by the Revolutionaries; or moderate, in which case it will be composed of such conflicting elements that the confusion which will ensue will render its existence impossible. Most of the Moderate Central Parties are veering towards an alliance with those of the Left, owing to the intense exasperation which is felt against the Government. At the meetings held by these Central Moderate Parties violently anti-Governmental speeches are made, and greeted with thunderous applause.

MOSCOW, *April 8th.*

The elections have taken place here to-day; and, as in St. Petersburg last week, the struggle lies between the Constitutional Democrats or Cadets and the union of the three Moderate parties (the Alliance of October 17th, the Party of Commerce and Industry, and the Party of Rightful Order), which calls itself the "Block."

In Moscow the conservative element, represented by the Party of Commerce and Industry, is said to be strong; there are strong conservative elements in the town; on the other hand the Cadets are exceedingly hopeful. The result of the elections will be known

to-morrow night. When the results of the elections were made public in St. Petersburg the attitude of the Right and of the October Party was curious. They said with one voice that it was not fair, that many of the electors had not received their voting cards, and that the elections should be cancelled. It was pointed out that possibly many of the Cadets had not received their voting cards either, but that they had taken the trouble to go and fetch them. Every possible explanation was given for the victory of the Cadets save the one that the majority of voters were in sympathy with their programme, and had therefore elected them. The situation recalled the state of feeling after the last General Election in England. During the weeks that preceded the elections the Cadets complained, and in many cases with good grounds, that their efforts in canvassing and electoral agitation generally were being seriously impeded by the police. Their one cry has been all along: "We are not revolutionaries. We are a political party. And we are being treated as revolutionaries." (The Social Revolutionaries are not taking part in the elections at all.) Somebody lately pointed out to me that if, in spite of all the measures taken against the Cadets, they still succeed in obtaining a majority, the result of the repressive measures will have been to secure a representative Duma. He meant that whether the Cadets are right or wrong, it is evident that they are infinitely more energetic and more capable of action than their adversaries, so that if they obtain a moderate success we shall be justified in concluding that, had they been in no way impeded, they would have obtained an overwhelming success; in which case the

Duma would have been representative exclusively of the more energetic opinion in Russia, and not, therefore, fairly representative of the whole opinion.

To understand their success one has only to read their programme. It is a little book which costs three kopecks, *i.e.*, two-thirds of a halfpenny. It lays down shortly, precisely, and in perspicuous language everything which those people desire who wish for a radical change of *régime* in Russia: (1) The equality of citizens before the law. (2) Freedom of religion. (3) Freedom of speech and of the Press. (4) The right to hold public meetings. (5) The right to form clubs and unions. (6) The right of petition. (7) The inviolability of the individual and his domicile (*habeas corpus*). (8) Abolition of illegal punishments and extraordinary Courts. (9) Freedom of the citizen to leave his country and abolition of the passport system. (10) The incorporation of the above-mentioned rights in the fundamental laws of the country. These ten clauses, which could be written on less than half a sheet of note-paper (I have just copied them from the official programme), form the basis of their creed. Besides these there are further and more detailed articles concerning the political organisation of the State; among which there is one which lays down that the representatives of the people should be elected by universal, equal, direct suffrage carried out by ballot, without distinction of religion, nationality, or sex. (There is a qualifying clause as to whether the introduction of woman's suffrage shall be immediate or not, which is not very clear.) The Cadets themselves say that their future behaviour depends entirely on the Government,

and that they have no wish to go further to the Left unless the Government push them thither.

I went to look at the voting in one of the districts this morning. It took place on the third floor of a minor place of entertainment. A small crowd was collected outside, getting thick around the door; at the door and on the staircase were canvassers of the two camps, those of the Cadets being mostly students. Upstairs a long string of people were waiting to vote in alphabetical order, and in a further room, of which I could get but a glimpse, I saw a green baize table and some respectable people sitting at it. The whole proceeding was orderly in the extreme. There has been nothing in the town to-day to tell the casual tourist that elections are going on, although the interest in them is keen.

It is Palm Sunday, and, therefore the customary fair is being held on the Red Place in front of the Kremlin, and as it has been a lovely day the crowd of strollers was immense. This fair is one of the most amusing sights to be seen in Russia. Two lines of booths occupy the space which stretches opposite the walls of the Kremlin. At the booths you can buy almost anything: birds, tortoises, goldfish, grass snakes, linoleum, carpets, toys, knives, musical instruments, books, music, cakes, lace, ikons, Easter eggs, carved woodwork, &c. There are besides these a number of semi-official stalls where kwass is sold to drink, and a great quantity of itinerant vendors sell balloons, things that squeak, penny whistles, trumpets, and chenille monkeys. The trade in goldfish was brisk (people often buying one goldfish in a small tumbler), but that in a special kind of whetstone

which cut glass and sharpened knives and cost twenty kopecks was briskest of all. The crowd round this stall, at which the vendor gave a continual exhibition of the practical excellence of his wares by cutting up bits of glass, was dense, and he sold any quantity of them. At the bookstall the selection was varied in the extreme; I bought two cheap copies of "Paradise Lost" in Russian with wonderful illustrations, but there were also back numbers of *Punch* to be got, some fragments of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and the Irish State Papers from 1584 to 1588. One man was selling silvered Caucasian whips which, he said, had just missed being silver. One man sold little sailors made of chenille, which, he said, represented the crew of the *Potemkin* without the captain. There was one fascinating booth called an American bazaar where everything cost five kopecks, and where you could buy almost anything.

I did not, to my regret, find at the bookstall a magazine which, I am told, has recently been published for children—children in the nursery, not schoolboys. It forms part of a series of publications resembling the "Bibliothèque Rose" in France. This magazine, I am told, leads off with an article on Herzen (the famous writer on Socialistic questions), and then continues with a cartoon of a man in chains in a dungeon, having dreamt of freedom, and waking to find he is bound; another cartoon follows representing a gallows, or some other such cheerful symbol, and it ends with an article on America, in which it is explained that the children in the United States have initiated and are carrying on a movement and agitation in favour of

the extension of suffrage to the nursery. This is what I think is called a sign of the times.

Certainly Russia is quite different from all other countries, and by saying it is the most Western of Oriental nations you get no nearer an explanation of its characteristics than by saying it is the most Oriental of Western nations. You live here, walk about, talk, and forget that you are in a place which is quite unique, until some small sight or episode or phrase brings home the fact to you, and you say "This is Russia," as Vernon Lee in her exquisite book on "The Spirit of Rome" exclaims, "This is Rome," when driving towards Monte Maggiore she hears the sound of the harmonium, and the school-children's hymn issuing out of a piece of broken ruin covered with fennel. Such a moment has just occurred to me to-night, when driving home through the empty streets at 11 p.m. I passed a church as the clock struck, and I heard a voice speaking loud quite close to me; I turned round and saw a policeman standing on the pavement, having faced about towards the church. He was saying his prayers in a loud sing-song; his whole body was swaying as he repeatedly crossed himself; in his arms he carried a twig of budding willow, which is the symbol of the palm-branches of to-day's festival; these branches yesterday and to-day have been sold and carried about all over Russia. Palm Sunday here is called the Feast of the Willow-branches. When I saw this policeman saying his prayers I experienced that peculiar twinge of recognition which made me think: "This is Russia."

CHAPTER XV

EASTER AT MOSCOW—THE FOREIGN LOAN

MOSCOW, *April 15th.*

I HAVE spent Easter in various cities—in Rome, Florence, Athens, and Hildesheim—and, although in each of these places the feast has its own peculiar aspect, yet by far the most impressive and the most interesting celebration of the Easter festival I have ever witnessed is that of Moscow. This is not to be wondered at, for Easter, as is well known, is the most important feast of the year in Russia, the season of festivity and holiday-making in a greater degree than Christmas or New Year's Day. Secondly, Easter, which is kept with equal solemnity all over Russia, is especially interesting in Moscow, because Moscow is the stronghold of old traditions, and the city of churches. Even more than Cologne, it is

> "Die Stadt die viele hundert
> Kapellen und Kirchen hat."

There is a church almost in every street, and the Kremlin is a citadel of cathedrals. During Holy Week, towards the end of which the evidences of the

fasting season grow more and more obvious by the closing of restaurants and the impossibility of buying any wine and spirits, there are, of course, services every day. During the first three days of Holy Week there is a curious ceremony to be seen every two years in the Kremlin. That is the preparation of the chrism or holy oil. While it is slowly stirred and churned in great cauldrons, filling the room with hot fragrance, a deacon reads the Gospel without ceasing (he is relieved at intervals by others), and this lasts day and night for three days. On Maundy Thursday it is removed in silver vessels to the Cathedral. The supply has to last the whole of Russia for two years. I went to the morning service in the Cathedral of the Assumption on Maundy Thursday. "It's long, but it's very, very beautiful." The church is crowded to suffocation. Everybody is standing up, as there would be no room to kneel. The church is lit with countless small wax tapers. The priests are clothed in white and silver. The singing of the noble plain chant without any accompaniment ebbs and flows in perfectly disciplined harmonies; the bass voices are unequalled in the world. Every class of the population is represented in the church. There are no seats, no pews, no precedence or privilege. There is a smell of incense and a still stronger smell of poor people, without which, some one said, a church is not a church. On Good Friday there is the service of the Holy Shroud, and besides this a later service in which the Gospel is read out in fourteen different languages, and finally a service beginning at one o'clock in the morning and ending at four, which commemorates the Burial of Our Lord. How the

priests endure the strain of these many and exceedingly long services is a thing to be wondered at; for the fast, which is strictly kept during all this period, precludes butter, eggs, and milk, in addition to all the more solid forms of nourishment, and the services are about six times as long as those of the Roman Catholic or other Churches.

The most solemn service of the year takes place at midnight on Saturday. From eight until ten o'clock the town, which during the day had been crowded with people buying provisions and presents and Easter eggs, seems to be asleep and dead. At about ten people begin to stream towards the Kremlin. At eleven o'clock there is already a dense crowd, many of the people holding lighted tapers, waiting outside in the square, between the Cathedral of the Assumption and that of Ivan Veliki. A little before twelve the cathedrals and palaces on the Kremlin are all lighted up with ribbons of various coloured lights. Twelve o'clock strikes, and then the bell of Ivan Veliki begins to boom: a beautiful full-voiced, immense volume of sound—a sound which Clara Schumann said was the most beautiful she had ever heard. Then it is answered by other bells, and a little later all the bells of all the churches in Moscow are ringing together. Then from the cathedral comes the procession; the singers first in crimson and gold; the bearers of the gilt banners; then the Metropolitan, also in stiff robes of crimson and gold, and after him the officials in their uniforms. They walk round the cathedral to look for the Body of Our Lord, and return to the cathedral to tell the news that He is risen. Then the guns go off, rockets are fired, and illuminations are

seen across the river, lighting up the distant cupola of the great Church of the Saviour with a cloud of fire.

The crowd begins to disperse and to pour into the various churches. I went to the Manège—an enormous riding school, in which the Ekaterinoslav Regiment has its church. Half the building looked like a fair. Long tables, twinkling with hundreds of wax tapers, were loaded with the three articles of food which are eaten at Easter; a huge cake called koulich; a kind of sweet cream made of curds and eggs, cream, and sugar, called Pascha (Easter); and Easter eggs, dipped and dyed in many colours. They are there waiting to be blessed. The church itself was a tiny little recess on one side of the building. There the priests were officiating and down below in the centre of the building the whole regiment was drawn up. There are two services—the service which begins at midnight, and which lasts about half an hour, and Mass, which follows immediately after it, lasting till about three in the morning. At the end of the first service, when "Christ is risen" is sung, the priest kisses the congregation three times and then the congregation kiss each other, one person saying "Christ is risen" and the other answering "He is risen, indeed." The colonel kisses the sergeant; the sergeant kisses all the men one after another. While this ceremony was proceeding I left and went to the Church of the Saviour, where the first service was not yet over. Here the crowd was so dense that it was almost impossible to get into the church, although it is immense. The singing in this church is ineffable, and it is worth while coming to Moscow simply for the sake of hearing it. I waited until the end of the first service and then I

was borne by the crowd to one of the narrow entrances and hurled through the doorway outside. The crowd was not rough, they were not jostling one another, but with cheerful carelessness people dived into it as you dive into a scrimmage at football, and propelled the unresisting herd towards the entrance; the result being, of course, that a mass of people got wedged into the doorway and the process of getting out took infinitely longer than it need have done, and had there been a panic nothing could have prevented one's being crushed to death. After this I went to a friend's house to break the fast and eat koulich, Pascha, and Easter eggs, and finally returned home when the dawn was faintly shining on the dark waters of the Moscow river, whence the ice disappeared only last week.

This morning people come to bring one Easter greetings and to give one Easter eggs and to receive gifts. I was writing in my sitting-room, and I heard a faint mutter in the next room, a small voice murmuring, "Gospodi, Gospodi" ("Lord, Lord"). I went to see who it was and found it was the policeman, sighing for his tip, not wishing to disturb, but at the same time anxious to indicate his presence. He brought me a crimson egg. Then came the doorkeeper and the cook. And the policeman must, I think, have been pleased with his tip, because policemen have been coming ever since, and there are not more than two who belong to my street.

In the afternoon I went to a hospital for wounded soldiers to see them keep Easter, which they did by playing blind man's buff to the sound of a flute played by one poor man who is crippled for life. One of the

soldiers gave me as an Easter gift a poem, which I will translate literally as it is a curious human document. It is called "Past and Present." This one is "Present":—

I lived the quarter of a century
Without knowing happy days;
My life went quickly as a cart
Drawn by swift horses.
I never knew the tenderness of parents
Which God gives to all;
For fifteen years I lived in a shop
Busied in heaping up riches for a rich man.
I was in my twentieth year,
When I was taken as a recruit;
I thought that the end had come
To my sorrowful sufferings,
But no! and here misfortune awaited me;
I was destined to serve in that country,
Where I had to fight like a lion with the foe,
For the honour of Russia, for my dear country.
I shall for a long time not forget
That hour, and that date of the 17th,[1]
In which by the River Liao-he
I remained forever without my legs.
Now I live contented with all
Where good food and drink are given,
But I would rather be a free bird
And see the dear home where I was born.

This is the sequel:

"PAST"

I will tell you, brothers,
How I spent my youth;

[1] August 17th, Battle of Liao-yang.

I heaped up silver,
I did not know the sight of copper;
I was merry, young and nice;
I loved lovely maidens;
I lived in clover, lived in freedom,
Like a young "barine."
I slept on straw,
Just like a little pig.
I had a very big house
Where I could rest.
It was a mouldy barn,
There where the women beat the flax.
Every day I bathed
In spring water;
I used for a towel
My scanty leg-cloth.
In the beer-shops, too,
I used to like to go,
To show how proudly
I knew how to drink "vodka."
Now at the age of twenty-six
This liberty no longer is for me.
I remember my mouldy roof,
And I shed a bitter tear.
When I lived at home I was contented,
I experienced no bitterness in service.
I have learnt to know something,
Fate has brought me to Moscow;
I live in a house in fright and grief,
Every day and every hour,
And when I think of liberty,
My sight is screwed with weeping.
That is how I lived from my youth;
That is what freedom means.
I drank "vodka" in freedom,
Afterwards I have only to weep.
Such am I, young Vanionsia,
This fellow whom you now see
Was once a splendid merry-maker,
Named Romodin.

These two poems, seemingly so contradictory, are the sincere expression of the situation of the man, who is now a cripple in the hospital. He gives both sides of each situation—that of freedom and that of living in a hospital.

On Saturday afternoon I went to one of the permanent fairs or markets in the town, where there are a great quantity of booths. Everything is sold here, and here the people buy their clothes. They are now buying their summer yachting caps. One man offered me a stolen gold watch for a small sum. Another begged me to buy him a pair of cheap boots. I did so; upon which he said: "Now that you have made half a man of me, make a whole man of me by buying me a jacket." I refused, however, to make a whole man of him.

April 16th.

To-day I went out to luncheon with some friends in the "Intelligenzia." We were a large party, and one of the guests was an officer who had been to the war. Towards the end of luncheon, when everybody was convivial, healths were drunk, and one young man, who proclaimed very loudly that he was a social revolutionary, drank to the health of the Republic. I made great friends with the social revolutionary during luncheon. When this health was drunk I was extremely alarmed as to what the officer might do. But the officer turned out to be this man's brother. The officer himself made a speech which was, I think, the most brilliant example of compromise I have ever heard; for he expressed his full sympathy with the

Liberal movement in Russia, including its representatives in the extreme parties, and at the same time he expressed his unalterable loyalty to his Sovereign.

After luncheon the social revolutionary, who had sworn eternal friendship to me, was told that I had relations in London who managed a bank. So he came up to me and said: "If *you* give our Government one penny in the way of a loan I shall shoot you dead."

After that we danced for the rest of the afternoon. The social revolutionary every now and then inveighed against loans and expressed his hope that the Government would be bankrupt.

April 17th.

I was looking out of the window this morning and saw the policeman who watches over my house, and often helps with the luggage, apparently arrest and walk off with a workman. I ran out of the house and said—

"Are you taking that man to the police-station?"

"God be with him, no," said the policeman. "Why should I arrest him? Do you want him arrested? He is 'having taken drink,' and I am taking him to a friend's house, where he can rest."

The policeman had thought I was complaining because he was not going to be arrested. This incident amused me, as being typical of the good-nature of a class of people who are represented as savage tyrants.

ST. PETERSBURG, *April 22nd.*

This afternoon, wishing to talk over the topics of the day and the political outlook, I went to see a friend of

mine, a certain Dimitri Nikolaievitch A——. Dimitri Nikolaievitch was a failure. He had started life with smiling prospects and the promise of a bright future, but he wasted his youth and his fortune in dissipation, and after spending some years in the Government service as an official he retired and embarked upon a journalistic venture; but, since he was entirely devoid of ambition, hopelessly unpractical, and fundamentally uncompetitive he failed, and was soon forced to abandon an enterprise which left him burdened with debts. He now earns a scanty income by giving lessons in Russian to foreigners. His whole literary production is confined to one or two suggestive literary and historical pamphlets long since out of print. I found him at home in his room, which is on the sixth floor of a large barrack in a remote quarter of the town. The landing on which he lives swarms with inhabitants, and a whole bevy of tailors were busily at work in the room opposite to his. His room is small, and scantily furnished with a chair, a table, a low bed, a few frameless photographs stuck on the wall, a mandoline, a guitar, and a *babalaika*. The room is also inhabited by a bullfinch, a green lizard, and a fox terrier. Dimitri Nikolaievitch himself looks younger than he is; he is rather fat, with fair, unkempt hair, very light blue eyes lighting up a wrinkled and rather puffy and unshaved face; his jacket is stained and lacking in buttons.

"I know why you have come," he said to me as I entered the room; "you have got to write an article and you want copy." "Exactly," I answered. "Why do you come to me? Why don't you interview the flower of our officialdom or some of our future Robes-

pierres and Dantons?" he asked. "You know as well as I do why I come to you for ideas," I said; "with all those people the wish is father to the thought. You have long ago ceased to wish about political matters, and so your point of view is quite unbiassed, besides which——" "I know," he interrupted; "you needn't go on, but before we talk of what is happening I want to tell you that I have finished my historical work." "What work?" I asked. "I think I told you," he said, "that I contemplated—now that forbidden thoughts are allowed an unwonted freedom—writing a short history of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas II. I have begun and finished it. It took me ten minutes. I thought it was going to take longer, but last night I happened to open the Old Testament, and I found that the history of the reign of Nicholas II. had already been written in the First Book of Kings more concisely than I had intended writing it. Listen, I will read it to you." He took a Bible from the table and read: "'And Rehoboam went to Shechem . for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him King. And it came to pass when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it . . . that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said,

How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men . . . and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, . . . and he said unto them, What counsel give ye? . . . and the young men . . . spake unto him saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people: . . . My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the King had appointed. . . . And the King answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel . . . and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. Wherefore the King hearkened not unto the people. . . . So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the people answered the King, saying, What portion have we in David? . . . To your tents, O Israel. . . . So Israel departed unto their tents. . . . Therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David.'

"That is the whole history of the reign of Nicholas II., and it is the history of many other reigns also. There are no new elements in history. History is a kaleido-

scope containing a limited number of bits of many-coloured glass, which, by being perpetually shaken, form patterns which recur, and combinations which seem new, but which in reality have been before and will be again. That is why the people who are snubbed for saying the revolutionary movement in Russia resembles the French Revolution are not so far wrong, because the same causes produce the same effects, and the situations, though superficially widely different, are alike in their essentials. Well, what is it you want to talk to me about?"

"I want to know what you think of the present situation," I answered. "Providence," said Dimitri Nikolaievitch, "has been kind to the Government in vouchsafing them a foreign loan, in spite of the German Emperor's disapproval."

"Do you think that the bitterness it has created among the parties of the Left is a serious matter?" I interrupted.

"No," said Dimitri Nikolaievitch, "I do not; and for this reason: I think that all talk about the loan now is, as Hamlet said, 'Words, words, words.' What does it all amount to? The Government say that unless the loan had been made before the Duma had met national bankruptcy would have ensued. The Liberals say a fortnight more or less could not have mattered, and the Government made the loan to be independent of the Duma. To which it is answered that the money is obviously for past deficits and not for present schemes. But, say others, the real reason why the loan was made before the Duma met was that had it not been made the Government would have been

absolutely at the mercy of the Duma. 'That is exactly what we wanted,' say the Social revolutionaries, because, short of such pressure, the Government will never do anything constitutional. 'The Government should have trusted the patriotism of the Duma to accept the loan,' say the Liberals. 'The foreign bankers have dealt a dastardly blow at the movement for Russian freedom,' say the Social revolutionaries. I say that this is all 'Words, words, words.' The money was imperatively necessary. National bankruptcy cannot be the best springboard for the initial leap of the Duma. And as to its effect on the movement of liberation—that is, I believe, the polite term for what I call the Revolution—I do not believe that it matters one straw. Supposing the loan had been postponed, the bitterness against the Government would not have been lessened, and national bankruptcy would not have made the situation any easier for the Cadets. You will object that the Social revolutionaries probably would have welcomed national bankruptcy. Of course, everything depends on the action of the Government now. What will happen? This Ministry cannot face the Duma. M. Durnovo will have to resign. It has been published all this week in the newspapers that Count Witte has resigned. We infer from this that Count Witte intends either to remain without M. Durnovo or to leave. But supposing his resignation is accepted and M. Durnovo remains?"

"But you do not think——" I interrupted.

"All things are possible," rejoined Dimitri Nikolaievitch; "remember that; because a course is suicidal that is no guarantee that it will not be taken; the contrary rather is true. Remember the story of Reho-

boam I have just read you: 'Es ist eine alte Geschichte, doch bleibt sie immer neu.'"

"But in any case," I asked, "how do you think any present or future Government will deal with the Duma?"

"That depends," he answered, "of course, on who has to deal with it. If the Duma is prorogued after a short session the situation will be hazardous. On the other hand, the whole thing may go off without any great cataclysm. The Cadets do not believe in the dispersal of the Duma. But if we have to take for granted that the higher authorities will behave wisely, in order to ensure things going smoothly, our optimism is put to a high trial. We have so few, we have not one precedent for wise conduct on the part of our Government. There is one comforting thing I can tell you, and that is that I feel certain of this: Whatever cataclysms may occur, in ten years' time Russia will be in a flourishing condition. Those who talk of Russia being financially unsound talk nonsense. Look at the country now; in spite of a disastrous war, a universal strike, other strikes, revolution, and armed risings, trade is simply humming. The head of one of your biggest English firms here told me yesterday that except the iron trade all the industries are in a flourishing condition. Orders come pouring in. Therefore, as regards the ultimate outlook I am optimistic, whatever happens in the immediate future; whether everything goes jolting on somehow, as may very well happen in Russia, or whether there is a frightful crash in the month of May. Both things are equally possible. So far what has happened is simple. The autocracy was made bank-

rupt by the war—bankrupt morally, I mean. An attempt was made to pass a sponge over the bankruptcy; this led to a universal strike; then the bankruptcy was recognised, and Count Witte was summoned to liquidate the affairs of the old firm. The liquidation was necessarily a troublous time; nobody was anxious to be concerned in it; certainly none of the people who intended to join the new firm later. Therefore members of the old firm had to be chosen. They got somewhat out of hand. Now the liquidation has come to a close. The new firm is going to start business. If it is impeded it will blow up the bank with dynamite and build a new house. But such an explosion will only affect the staff of the old establishment and not the resources of the new firm, which are the kingdoms of Russia—an incredibly rich and undeveloped concern. If you ask my opinion, I do not think that any such explosion is inevitable, but the Government will no doubt take pains to bring it about. Three years ago a revolution seemed to be an impossibility in Russia. The Government have almost succeeded in making the reverse an improbability.

"But all this is, as I told you, 'Words, words, words,' and I refuse to say another word about politics."

CHAPTER XVI

THE AGRARIAN QUESTION—ON THE EVE OF THE DUMA

SOSNOFKA, *April 29th.*

TO understand the cause of the present state of agriculture in Russia, owing to the disastrous nature of which the agricultural question is the acutest of the problems which have to be settled by the Duma, it is necessary to go back to the time of the emancipation of the serfs.

It is from this epoch that the ruin of Russian agriculture primarily dates; it was then that the first crash occurred, and it was due to the following causes. The landlords, who had been accustomed to obtain manual labour for nothing, proved incapable of adapting themselves at once to the new conditions, and they did one of two things. They either spent the money they received from the Government in return for the land which they had given up in fruitless efforts to make agricultural improvements — fruitless because, being devoid of practical knowledge, they did what was not necessary and left undone what was imperative; or they simply spent the money anyhow until they had none left. Hence agricultural depression. Half the

landlords in Russia disappeared, and their vacant places were occupied firstly in a small degree by peasants, and secondly in a greater degree by merchants, who were determined to extract the uttermost farthing from their possessions. In this manner there came into existence a new and mixed class of landed proprietors, who can be divided into two principal sections: (1) Those who let all their land to the peasants; (2) those who endeavoured as far as possible to carry on agriculture rationally, and arrived, in spite of the obstacles inherent in the circumstances, at comparatively good results.

As everybody is probably now aware, the question of expropriation of private property is being brought forward as a solution of the land question. And the question of expropriation as it is now being discussed applies to the second as well as the first class of proprietors mentioned above. With regard to the first class there is no possible argument against the expropriation of all their land. With regard to the second class, their land, considered from the point of view of the State, represents a considerable asset. If this land were immediately to be handed over in entirety to the peasants, the value that it represents to the State would cease to exist, because the peasants have not at this moment the means of keeping the output of the land up to its present level. And it would be impossible at this moment for the State to provide them with the necessary means. It is just because the peasants are without the necessary means—because, in a word, they are too poor—that they are asking for more land.

Therefore, from the point of view of the State, it is clear that if a plan of wholesale expropriation is put into practice the immediate results will be a decrease of public revenue and an increase of agricultural depression all over Russia. If we look at the question from the point of view of the peasants, the relief which they would obtain by wholesale expropriation would be only of a temporary nature, even if we presuppose that the distribution of land could be carried out on the same scale and in the same proportion as at the time of the emancipation of the serfs, which is improbable. The relief would be only temporary, because owing to the constant increase of the population the land would dwindle in an equally constant and increasing process of subdivision, and the State would be unable to come to the aid of the peasants and to furnish them with the means of improving their methods of agriculture, owing to the fall of revenue occasioned as aforesaid by the expropriation.

Besides the expropriation of private property, what further solutions are suggested? There are two further schemes which are under discussion: expropriation of the lands belonging to the State, and emigration into the undeveloped portions of the Russian Empire. There are in Russia large stretches of land belonging to the State and to the Crown; but they consist principally of woods, and it is therefore highly undesirable that they should be touched, for since Russia suffers from extremes of heat and cold, from dryness, and from the continental quality of its climate, the woods, which give moisture, are of the utmost value,

especially at the present moment when so many woods belonging to private landowners have been and are being cut down.

Next comes the question of emigration. There exist in Siberia and Turkestan immense stretches of rich and fertile country; this being so it is obvious that if an emigration scheme could be carried out on a large scale the land question would be on a fair way towards settlement, and the State would be in possession of fresh resources.

The Left parties in general meet this plan with two objections: they say (1) that the peasants are not capable of adapting themselves to the new local conditions of agriculture which they would have to face; (2) that the expenses entailed by the agricultural installation of the emigrants, who would have to be provided with everything, could not possibly be met, and that therefore emigration cannot be regarded as a definite solution of the land question.

These objections are in their turn met with the following counter-arguments. It is said that the first objection has been proved to be groundless by the cases of emigration in Turkestan, where it is seen that the peasants who emigrate thither adapt themselves with surprising facility and rapidity to new conditions, which include a peculiarly complicated system of irrigation, and have nothing in common with the agricultural conditions of Russia proper. It might also be stated that Russians in general, and the peasants in particular, are a singularly adaptable race, as is proved by the ease and the speed with which those

who emigrate to Europe and America adapt themselves to their altered circumstances.

As to the second question, that of expense, it is far more serious. But here it is objected that the premises on which those who are opposed to emigration on the grounds of expense base their arguments are derived from the results obtained at an epoch when emigration, like everything else, was as badly managed as possible; and that owing to this bad management hostility towards emigration was aroused among the peasants themselves, who as it is, do not care to leave their homes unless they are obliged to do so. That emigration is one of the possible radical methods of solving the land question is obvious. It is further obvious that if it is to be adopted a system of investigation into the suitability of places for emigration and likewise a system of means of communication must be organised. It is equally obvious that the State must not only furnish material aid but moral aid by furthering educational progress and the amelioration of general culture by every means at its disposal.

It is hardly necessary to say now that up to the present the State has acted in the contrary sense by every means at its disposal. There was a moment after the emancipation under Alexander II. when this was not so, and efforts towards general improvement were made; this epoch did not last long, and progress was definitively checked by the reactionary *régime* of Alexander III., which reached its culminating point under the reign of M. Plehve. That it is feasible to make for progress in Russia and

that this is not a Utopian ideal is proved by the simple fact that in spite of all the obstacles created by the Government, schools, instituted by the Zemstva, have flourished, with the result that, roughly speaking, 40 per cent. of the younger generation in Russia can now read and write, whereas at the time of the emancipation of the serfs, when the Zemstva came into existence, 2 per cent. only could read and write.

This question—the promotion of universal culture by which alone progress can come—is the most acute of all the questions now existing in Russia, because the country has been driven by the present system to the extreme limits of its endurance—to the very brink of ruin, to the uttermost desperation. And it will not, therefore, be surprising if the reaction in the opposite direction is equally violent, and Russia passes from one extreme to the other; in which case those who are responsible for not having put an end to the present *régime*, until they felt the knife at their throats, and even then reluctantly, will find food for not altogether cheerful reflection.

SOSNOFKA, *April 30th.*

I have been ten days in the country and have seen the pageant of early spring in Russia. The trees are not yet all green, but the blossom is out everywhere, and the bees are buzzing round it and filling the air with their noise. To-day we went to see the examination held in the school. The children were examined in Scripture, geography, and reading. I did not stay the whole time. The children I heard acquitted themselves splendidly. I was allowed to look over and

mark some of the dictations. After the examination was over we had dinner with the schoolmaster and played "preference." A neighbour, who looked in at the schoolmaster's, said that he was pleased to see the Russian Government was coming to its senses in one respect, and trying to arrive at an understanding with the British Government.

MOSCOW, *May 7th.*

In a few days the Russian Parliament will be sitting, the curtain will have risen, the drama will be in full swing, and the echoes and impressions of to-day will have been forgotten and superseded by the rumour of more important events. And yet significant things have happened in the last few days. The resignation of Count Witte did not come as a surprise; we knew during the last ten days that Count Witte had sent in his resignation; but the resignation of M. Durnovo was somewhat unexpected. It was generally said that Count Witte would go, and that M. Durnovo would remain.

The popular attitude towards Count Witte during the last year must be of singular interest to those to whom the contemplation of human affairs affords a melancholy amusement. The enthusiasm with which the hero of Portsmouth was received; the further enthusiasm created by his report to the Emperor; the Manifesto of October 17th, which everybody knew would not and could not have been but for Count Witte; then the gradual tide of reaction; at first, faults but hinted and dislike but hesitated; distrust, latent, but scarcely expressed; then impatient questioning; conflicting

criticism; manifold explanation; and very soon unanimous blame, and venomous vituperation, hatred, and abuse. "When time has swept away the dust-clouds of partiality, partisanship, and passion, the work of Count Witte will stand out clear in the impartial light of history. I do not think the verdict can be a severe one. Count Witte's task was to get to the Duma somehow or other, to keep things going until the Duma should meet, without a general break-down. This task he accomplished, and he has managed to get a foreign loan into the bargain. That it was an easy task not the most fanatical of his opponents would say; that he was hampered on all sides is obvious; that his instruments broke in his hands is likewise obvious; that not only no shadow of loyal co-operation was shown to him by his colleagues, but that even his subordinates flatly refused to obey him, was proved by one or two incidents which occurred during the last fortnight, such as the case of the Kharkov Professor, sent to exile by M. Durnovo, in spite of Count Witte's express and expressed desire, and the case of M. Sipiagin, who was not permitted to go to Sevastopol, in spite of Count Witte's categorical instructions. Whether Count Witte made the most of his opportunities I do not know, and the man who passes a sweeping judgment on this point will be bold; but I am convinced of one thing, and that is that no man in Russia would have performed the task which was Count Witte's, given the peculiar circumstances of the case, better. Count Witte and M. Durnovo have gone, and their places have been taken by a Cabinet exclusively bureaucratical and reactionary. What is the

meaning of this? I asked some one yesterday whether this Cabinet was meant to be of a temporary nature.

"It's put there to be kicked out," he answered. "Mind you, I mean *kicked* out," he continued, "and not to go of its own accord." If this is the case, what my friend Dimitri Nikolaievitch hinted to me at St. Petersburg—namely, that the fact that a course was fatal, so far from constituting a guarantee that it would not be adopted, on the contrary weighed down the balance of probabilities in its favour—has come true. I cannot quite bring myself to believe it. It is only when we turn to the past—to the history of revolutionary movements in every country and at every epoch—that we see how, in obedience to some mysterious law, a fatal mist seems to blind those in authority, and how they deliberately choose the disastrous course the perils of which seem to us so obvious, and the avoidance of which seems to us so simple. In 1769 Junius addressed the King as follows:—

"We separate the amiable, good-natured Prince from the folly and treachery of his servants, and the private virtues of the man from the vices of his Government. Were it not for this just distinction I know not whether your Majesty's condition or that of the English people would deserve most to be lamented. . . . Your subjects, Sir, wish for nothing but that as *they* are reasonable and affectionate enough to separate your person from your Government; so *you*, in your turn, would distinguish between the conduct which becomes the permanent dignity of a King, and that which serves only to promote the temporary interest and miserable ambition of a Minister."

In the same letter he wrote as follows about the Army:—

"From the uses to which one part of the Army has been too frequently applied you have some reason to expect that there are no services they would refuse. Here, too, we trace the partiality of your understanding. You take the sense of the Army from the conduct of the Guards, with the same justice that you collect the sense of the people from the representations of the Ministry. Your marching regiments, sir, will not make the Guards their example either as soldiers or subjects. They feel and resent, as they ought to do, that invariable undistinguishing favour with which the Guards are treated; while those gallant troops, by whom every hazardous, every laborious service is performed, are left to perish in garrisons abroad or pine in quarters at home, neglected and forgotten. If they had no sense of the great original duty they owe their country, their resentment would operate like patriotism, and leave your cause to be defended by those on whom you have lavished the rewards and honours of their profession."

Finally, he makes an appeal which has been made at all times and in all countries in times of popular dissatisfaction, and has always been made in vain. The words which I am about to quote embody what has been thought in this country during all the last months by the vast majority of thinking people, by all who had brains to think and were not blinded by fanatical rage.

"Without consulting your Minister, call together your whole Council. Let it appear to the public that you

can determine and act for yourself. Come forward to your people; lay aside the wretched formalities of a king and speak to your subjects with the spirit of a man and in the language of a gentleman. Tell them you have been fatally deceived: the acknowledgment will be no disgrace, but rather an honour to your understanding. Tell them you are determined to remove every cause of complaint against your Government; that you will give your confidence to no man that does not possess the confidence of your subjects; and leave to themselves to determine, by their conduct at a future election, whether or not it be in reality the general sense of the nation that their rights have been arbitrarily invaded. . . ."

Hope, indeed, springs eternal in the human breast; otherwise people would not persist in giving such admirable, such simple advice, seeing how little chance there is that it will ever be adopted.

Yesterday morning a man threw a bomb at the Governor-General's carriage, killing his *aide-de-camp* and losing his own life, while the Governor-General escaped miraculously. About an hour after the explosion I went to the Hôtel Dresden with a naval officer who was staying with me. It appeared that the man who had thrown the bomb was disguised as a naval officer; a man in such a costume is seldom seen in Moscow, and is certain to attract attention. I and my naval friend had already been to the hotel in the morning; when we returned the hotel keeper said to us, "You are suspected of having thrown the bomb." It was easy to prove that we were not guilty, owing to the presence of the dead man who had done the

deed. His naked body was lying in a house on one side of the Square; he had a horrible wound in his head. The attitude of the general public with regard to the attempt was curious. When we got home, people said to us, "Have you heard the news? What a pity that two men were killed uselessly, and that the Governor-General escaped!" They talked about it exactly as if they had narrowly missed backing a winner. Later I heard of two girls who quarrelled because one of them said that she was sorry the *aide-de-camp* had been killed. The lower classes do not seem to pay the slightest attention to the matter. In the middle classes people have lost all moral sense with regard to these outrages. They consider that throwing bombs is a kind of lynch-law; they do not distinguish one individual from another, the honest from the dishonest, the harmless from the guilty. But the people who are to be blamed are those who, by bringing certain things to pass, have created this feeling. When the Government takes no notice of outrages committed on the people, and allows the perpetrators to go scot free, it is not to be wondered that the people are "more than usual calm" when they hear that a governor has been blown up. It is none the less very demoralising for the present young generation in Russia.

May 11th.

Two men asked me for some money in the street this morning because they had been drunk yesterday. I went to the soldiers' hospital in the afternoon, and was much struck by the way in which the soldiers talked of

the Duma. These men, during the epoch which had followed the "Manifesto," had been violently against what they called the "Strikers." They had told me that when the procession attending Bauman's funeral had passed the windows of their hospital they would have liked to have shot the dogs. Now they say that they understand that had there been no strike there would have been no Duma, and that on the Duma everything depended. One man asked me how long the Duma would last and when the first Parliament was made in England. One of the soldiers asked me for books the other day, and I bought him several of Scott's novels. He was so delighted with "Quentin Durward" that the nurse told me he read all day and would not leave his book for a moment. He told me the whole story of "Quentin Durward" with the various conversations between the characters.

CHAPTER XVII

THE OPENING OF THE DUMA

ST. PETERSBURG, *May 14th.*

I HAD the good fortune to gain admission to the Duma yesterday afternoon. I think it is the most interesting sight I have ever seen. When you arrive at the Tauris Palace, which outside has an appearance of dignified stateliness, the stateliness of the end of the Eighteenth Century, you walk through a spacious front hall into what looks like a gigantic white ball-room built in the late Louis XVI. style. This is the lobby; beyond it is the Hall of the Duma itself. In this long gallery members and visitors were already flocking, walking up and down, talking, and smoking cigarettes and throwing away the ashes and the ends on the polished floor. One saw peasants in their long black coats, some of them wearing military medals and crosses; popes, Tartars, Poles, men in every kind of dress except uniform. When the sitting began I went up into the gallery. The Hall of the Duma itself is likewise white, delicate in decoration, an essentially gentlemanlike room. The sitting began about three o'clock. The members go to their appointed places, on which their cards are fixed, and the impression

of diversity of dress and type becomes still stronger and more picturesque.

You see dignified old men in frock coats, aggressively democratic-looking "intelligents," with long hair and pince-nez, a Polish bishop dressed in purple, who looks like the Pope; men without collars; members of the proletariate, men in loose Russian shirts with belts; men dressed by Davies or Poole, and men dressed in the costume of two centuries ago. The President walked in to his seat under the portrait of the Emperor, which is a rather shiny study in blue and white. One thanked Heaven the Duma had not been redecorated in the *art nouveau* style, for almost all the modern buildings in Russia, from Moscow to Kharbin, are built in the mixture of Munich, Maple, and Japan which is called *art nouveau* (modern style), and in Russia "decadent."

The President, C. A. Muromzev, strikes one as dignity itself. He exercises his functions with perfect serenity and absolute fairness. After reading congratulatory telegrams from various parts of the Empire he proceeded to read a motion proposed by a workman of the Government of Moscow that before proceeding further a telegram should be sent to the Emperor asking for a general amnesty for political offenders, and another motion asking for an immediate amnesty, proposed by a peasant. A debate ensued. The speeches were sensible and moderate. Most of the members spoke against the motion, and it seemed as if the matter was settled in the sense that the question of amnesty would be dealt with in the Reply to the Address and not before, when Professor Kovolievski proposed a third course, that the President

of the Duma should inform the Emperor of the unanimous desire of the Duma for a general amnesty. What struck me most in the speeches I heard was the naturalness of their tone, and the absence of declamatory emphasis. Several of the speeches were eloquent; only one was tedious. Professor Kovolievski began speaking in his seat, and went on with his speech quietly and in the most natural manner conceivable, as he walked up to the tribune, where he continued it, just as if he were engaged in a quiet talk with a few intimate friends. A second thing which struck me was the respect and the instantaneous obedience shown to the President; when he called to order by ringing his bell the silence was immediate and complete. Soon after four o'clock there was an *entr'acte*, and the Duma proceeded to elect the thirty-three members by whom the Reply to the Address is to be drawn up. The members poured into the gallery, and everywhere small groups collected discussing various matters; some carried on their discussions in the adjacent lobbies and rooms; many went to drink tea or have some food in the dining-room, where the accommodation is excellent.

Many of the small groups where the discussion was being carried on were interesting. One heard violent ideas and wild words being bandied about. One peasant said to a friend of mine: "When I look upon this palace my blood boils; it was built out of the blood and the sweat of the poor." So it was. "Then you are a person who nurses hatred?" said my friend. "Yes," he answered. "I hate, hate, hate the rich!" Another man told a lady of my acquaintance that he was a

Socialist. She asked him if he was in favour of the land being made over to the State. He said, "No." He explained his views, which were really rather those of an extreme Radical than of a Socialist, clearly and with intelligence, and at the end she said to him, "But you are not a Socialist?" "Yes, I am," he answered; and asked her who she was. She said that she was the daughter of a Count who is a member of the Duma. "I am very pleased to have spoken with a Countess," he answered, perfectly simply. I saw a big landed proprietor, he came up to me and said, "This is very amusing for you; but to me it is life and death." After the interval the sitting was continued. At 6.45 p.m. the result of the election of the thirty-three members was read out, and Professor Kovolievski's motion was debated shortly and rejected. After this the question of closure was discussed and referred to a committee. Then I left. The sitting came to an end shortly afterwards.

My impression of the whole is that the Duma is far more moderate than I expected. I do not think, and I never have thought, that the Cadet leaders are a set of unpractical idealists or terrorists in disguise. Both these ideas seem to me both to be *a priori* absurd, and to be confuted by the facts. Supposing England had been governed for years solely by the permanent officials without any control whatsoever—and the only difference that I have ever seen between Russian officials and those of England or any other country is that the Russian officials are uncontrolled, and those of other countries are not—supposing that there were in England a large party headed, let us

say, by men such as Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Keir Hardie, Lord Wemyss, and Lord Percy—I mix up Liberals and Conservatives on purpose, because if in England there were an autocracy, it is probable that all our Statesmen, whether Liberal or Conservative, would be on the side of the opposition—would not the officials and all their supporters with one voice say that these men were not practical men? The Cadets are not idealist professors or men of letters or philosophers. They are educated men, some of them learned and experienced lawyers, some of them acute men of business, who in any other country would unquestionably play a part in the government of their country. In Russia (if they have not been lawyers) they have been of necessity professors —if they have wished to play any part in public life save that of an official—because no other course has been open to them. On the day of the opening of the Duma I went to a Cadet meeting of one branch of the party at Moscow, a branch representing one small part of the town. The conduct of the meeting and the character of the speeches were exactly on the level of the best political meetings in other countries. A lawyer made a most brilliant speech, based on the soundest common sense. And I am certain that if any of our leading political men had been present they would have found nothing to criticise and much to praise.

Of course, the question which is being anxiously asked is whether the leaders of the Cadets will be able to keep the more violent elements of their party in hand. The violent element does not seem to me to be a very large one. And I think that the future violence or

moderation of the Duma will depend very largely on the action of the higher authorities, and of what is at present the official Government.

Will the Emperor trust M. Muromzev, the President of the Duma? If he does, the two together will save the situation. Unfortunately, the impression seems to be prevalent among higher circles in St. Petersburg that the Cadets are revolutionaries, Jacobins, and terrorists. If one has attended the Cadet meetings, where they are among themselves and have no object in concealing either their ideas or their tactics, one sees that they are entirely separated from the Social Revolutionary Party, which in its turn looks upon the Cadets with contemptuous scorn.

Yesterday a peasant said in his speech: "We hear it said that we have millions of men behind us, and we must demand, not ask; these high-sounding phrases are all very well for a private meeting, but are out of place in the Duma." This was a very sensible thing to say; but it is true, nevertheless, that the Duma has the whole country behind it. Another peasant, speaking at a small meeting a few days ago, said: "Russia has waited for the Duma as the chosen people had waited for the Messiah. Will they dare to crucify it? No, they will not dare. For who would be the Pilate? The Emperor will not be the Pilate, for, if he were to call for water in which to wash his hands, he would have to wash his hands, not in the waters of the Neva, but in the blood of the whole Russian people."

ST. PETERSBURG, *May 18th.*

Last night the second reading of the Address in reply

to the Speech from the Throne was passed by the Duma. What will be the attitude of the Government with regard to the demands which have been formulated? As far as I have been able to gauge it, the attitude of the supporters of the Government and of the more Conservative element in the Council of Empire is this: they say the demands of the Duma are impossible; that the Duma is not a representative Duma; that no notice must be paid to its extravagant and foolish talk; that it must be allowed to talk on, and that Russia will then see that its demands are preposterous. This I believe to be the attitude of the Government. In support of its contention that the Duma is not representative, it alleges that Count Witte is to blame in having insisted on suffrage by three degrees. Had there been universal suffrage, they add, the Duma would have been more Conservative. The day before yesterday I attended the sitting of the Council of Empire, and during the interval I had some conversation with some of the members, and these were the kind of things I heard. Then I went to the Duma and I talked to the peasants. I asked one of them if he thought it was true that the Duma was not representative and whether the opinions it expressed were a faithful reflection of the opinion of the country. He said that the opinion in the country was far stronger than anything which had been expressed in the Duma. I believe that he was perfectly right. One can only judge by one's personal experience, and wherever I have been during the last month I have found the feeling among the people dangerously tense and inexpressibly vehement. I said to this peasant, who came from the Government of Archangel: "Do they expect much of

the Duma in your part of the country?" "They expect nothing at all," he answered, "because the Government will never give the Duma what it wants, and we shall have to disperse." "And then?" I asked. "Then we shall take what we want," he said very calmly. "There has always been a wall of bureaucracy between us and the Emperor," he continued, "and that wall is still there." Talking to other members I found that they were just as little illusioned with regard to the attitude of the Government as the peasant from Archangel. One of them said to me: "Yes; it means there will be a conflict." Another said: "There is no connecting link between us and the Emperor. We must have a responsible Ministry, and it is on that point that the struggle will be centred." Another peasant said to me: "We are not opposed to having two Houses; but we are opposed to the Council of Empire as it now stands, because half of it consists of the same Bureaucrats who have been the cause of all our trouble."

I spent the whole of yesterday and most of the day before in the Duma, and listened to a great many speeches. The most salient fact about the sittings of the Duma is their extreme orderliness. People say that this is because the members are new to their business and that the Duma will soon learn to be as disorderly as the House of Commons. It is a fact, of course, that the absence of conflict arising from the friction between sharply-defined parties contributes to the general harmony. But I doubt if the Duma will ever be a very turbulent Parliament. Russians have a peculiar talent for listening to public speaking. I have noticed this constantly. I have sometimes wondered, for instance,

whether it was possible for a play to be hissed off the stage in Russia just because it is tedious. A Russian audience seems to me capable of listening patiently to act after act of uneventful and colourless dialogue, to things which would drive an Italian audience to frenzy in five minutes, and would bore the British public into throwing a dead cat on the stage. When they act "Julius Cæsar" in Russia the scene in which Mark Antony makes his speech loses half its effect by the attitude of the crowd on the stage, who stand listening in perfect silence, like moujiks listening to a sermon in church.

Yesterday the Duma sat from 11.30 a.m. until past midnight, with a very short interval. The weather was stiflingly hot, and yet the House listened to a series of not very lively speeches, not only with decorous patience, but with keen interest. The most striking orators so far seem to be Professor Kovolievski, and MM. Rodichev and Aladin, the first being remarkable for his perfect naturalness, the second for his rather theatrical eloquence, which, I confess, does not appeal to me personally, but pleases most people, and the third for his uncompromising directness of speech and powerful driving force. There are others besides these, and among them some of the peasants, who speak extremely well. I asked a peasant who spoke best. He said: "Rodichev spoke very well, and Jilkin (principal representative of the peasant group) spoke well and quietly." I mentioned Aladin. "He is an angry speaker," he said. "He knows, but he ought to speak more gently." M. Aladin has spent many years in England, whither he went as an immigrant. Mirabeau heard Robespierre

speak at the States-General (I think), and said: "That young man will go very far, for he believes everything he says." I think this would apply to M. Aladin.

I heard some one say to a peasant who came from the South of Russia: "You should think of your common interests; if each class only thinks of itself what will happen? Do you think that one can be happy just by possessing land?" Then, in the course of discussion on the state of the peasants in Russia, he suddenly asked: "How long ago is it since Christ died?" When he was told he answered: "When will people begin to be Christians?"

Last night, when I was driving home from the Duma, my cabman asked me many questions about it, and he said that he had been a soldier himself and saw a great deal of the soldiers here, and that if the Duma was dispersed or came to nothing and the Government attempted to exercise repressive measures they would refuse to fight, because what applied to the peasants applied to them. They were peasants, and the only way in which their lot could be bettered was by the lot of the peasants being bettered. "The Government," he added, "does not want things to go quietly. It wants a *bunt* (a rising), so that it can put it down by force and then go on as before as in the good old days, but this time it will not succeed, because the soldiers will refuse to fire, and there will be a row such as there was at Kronstadt, only on a far larger scale, and St. Petersburg will be looted.

May 20th.

This evening, as I was walking home to my lodgings, I was attracted by signs of disturbance in a side street

off the Big Morskaia, where I live. I went to see what was happening. A drunken soldier was lurching down the street, making rude remarks to the passers-by. He was arrested and with difficulty guided to the police station, which happened to be in that street, by two policemen.

When they went into the police station a small crowd of men, women, and children collected round the door, which was guarded by a small boy of about twelve years of age.

A woman, with a shawl over her head, made an indignant speech to the assembled public about the arbitrariness of the police in arresting the poor soldiers. "We know," she said, "what goes on in there. They're beating him now."

"Shame!" cried the crowd, and made a move for the door. But the unkempt little boy who was guarding it said: "You can't come in here."

"Ah, we know you *dvorniks*" (door-keepers), said the woman, "you are worse than the police." "Yah!" joined in the crowd, and a child said to the boy, with inexpressible contempt, "Ugh! *Satrap!* Police-station chicken!"

Then the crowd broke up.

CHAPTER XVIII

FURTHER IMPRESSIONS OF THE DUMA

May 23rd.

EVERY time I pay a fresh visit to the Duma I am struck by the originality of the appearance of its members. There is a Polish member who is dressed in light-blue tights, a short Eton jacket and Hessian boots. He has curly hair, and looks exactly like the hero of the "Cavalleria Rusticana." There is a Polish member who is dressed in a long white flannel coat reaching to his knees, adorned with an intricate pattern of dark crimson braid, and he also wears a long, soft, brown sleeveless cloak hanging from his shoulders, bordered with vermilion stripes. There are some Socialists who wear no collars, and there is, of course, every kind of head-dress you can conceive. The second, and what is to me the principal impression of the Duma, is the familiar ease with which the members speak; some of them speak well, and some of them speak badly, but they all speak as if they had spoken in Parliament all their lives, without the slightest evidence of nervousness or shyness. The sittings of the Duma are like a meeting of acquaintances in a club or a *café*. There is nothing formal about them. The member

walks up to the tribune and sometimes has a short conversation with the President before beginning his speech. Sometimes when he is called to order he indulges in a brief explanation. The last sitting I attended they did their work in a most business-like manner and got through it fairly quickly and without many speeches. The peasants think there is too much speaking altogether. One of them said to me, "There are people here who have no right to be here." "Who?" I asked. "Popes, for instance," he said. "Why shouldn't Popes be members?" I asked. "Because they get 200 roubles a year," he answered; "what more can they want?" If this principle were carried out in England there would be no members of Parliament at all.

Nobody can possibly say the Duma is disorderly; it takes itself with profound seriousness. Only one person has made a joke so far. But there have been many dramatic moments; for instance, when the President announced that he was not to be received by the Emperor, and when for the first time, in breathless silence, one of the Under Ministers spoke from the Ministerial Bench. The beauty of the hall in which the members sit is increased by its outlook, for the windows form a semicircle behind the President's chair and they look out on a sheet of water and trees; a kind of Watteau-Versailles landscape where *fêtes galantes* were once probably held. Two peasants cross-questioned me narrowly the other day about England and English Parliamentary institutions. They asked me if there was an income tax in England, what sort of education I had received, what was the state of

agriculture in England, what was the rotation of the crops (to which question I gave a vaguely complicated answer), and how long the House of Commons had existed.

On Monday morning an amusing incident occurred in the Lobby; on the notice-board a telegram from the *Temps* was pinned, in which it was said that the demands of the Duma were unreasonable. One of the peasants strongly objected to this, and said that it might influence the peasants. It was pointed out to him that telegrams were posted in the House of Commons and in all Parliaments. He then said, "Why don't they put up all the telegrams? Why do they choose that telegram in particular? Besides, the English House of Commons has existed for centuries; our Parliament is being born, and to do that sort of thing is like interfering with a woman when she is giving birth to a child." If it be urged that the members of the Duma have spoken a great deal, I should like to remind my readers that they have got through a great deal of business in a short time. They passed the rules with regard to closure and the Address comparatively quickly, and they have now their Agrarian Bill ready for discussion.

Last Sunday I spent the afternoon at Peterhof, a suburb of St. Petersburg, where the Emperor lives. There in the park amidst the trees the splashing waterfalls and the tall fountains, "les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres," the lilac bushes, and the song of many nightingales, the middle classes were enjoying their Sunday afternoon and the music of a band. In this beautiful and not inappropriate setting suddenly

the Empress of Russia passed in an open carriage, without any escort, looking as beautiful as a flower. I could not help thinking of Marie Antoinette at the Trianon, and I wondered whether three thousand swords would leap from their scabbards on her behalf.

ST. PETERSBURG, *May 24th.*

One is repeatedly told by the best authorities that it is a mistake to compare what is taking place now in Russia with the French Revolution. It is, I know, misleading, and yet I cannot help thinking that, besides the fact of all revolutions having more or less the same fundamental causes, and proceeding, broadly speaking, on the same lines, there are certain superficial resemblances of detail between the two movements which are startling. What occurred in Russia last year was, properly speaking, a prologue; it was not comparable to the events of 1789, because we had not in Russia yet reached the period which corresponds to 1789. But now with the opening of the Duma it seems to me that we are reaching this point. This evening a Russian friend of mine asked me to glance at a short manual of French history which was lying on the table and to notice how striking the resemblance is between the account of the opening of the States-General and that of the Duma.

Before discussing this point there is a greater and more important resemblance to be noted, namely, that the Constitutional Democrats or the Cadets are not only playing the part, but are in their essence the same thing, as the Tiers-État in France. The Constitutional Democrats represent the whole of the educated middle

class of Russia, and they are championing the rights and the wishes of the peasants. It is, therefore, a case, if ever, of saying like Sieyès: "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?—La nation. Qu'est-il?—Rien. Que doit-il être? —Tout." Up to now the Tiers-État in Russia has been politically nothing. In the future it will probably be everything.

What do the Cadets want? I find the answer in my French history. "Établir l'unité politique et sociale de la nation par l'égalité devant la loi et la garantir par la liberté, c'était là, en deux mots, tout l'esprit de 1789." That is also the whole spirit of 1906. People both in Russia as well as abroad minimise the pretensions of the Cadets because they are unaware of the existence, or rather of the nature, of the middle class in Russia. This is not surprising, because the middle class, besides having been denied all access to political life, has produced no startlingly great men in the branches of production which obtain popular fame. The great Russian writers and artists came nearly all from the aristocracy or from the peasantry. Men who have contributed much to modern science have abounded in the middle class, but the fame of such men is rarely popular. But now the work which the Cadets have so far accomplished politically is a work which needs not a few great men, but a compact mass of men who are agreed.

To go back to the French Revolution. It is striking to read sentences such as the following, describing the opening of the States-General: "Dès le 2 mai tous les députés furent présentés au roi; le 4, ils se rendirent en procession solennelle à l'église de Saint-Louis. . . . L'éti-

quette avait assigné aux députés du Tiers un modeste vêtement noir ; ils furent couverts d'applaudissements. Les habits brodés de la noblesse passèrent au milieu du silence. . . . Le 5 mai s'ouvrirent les États. . . . Le roi était sur son trône, entouré des princes du sang ; sur les degrés se tenait la cour. Le reste de la salle était occupé par les trois ordres . . . le roi exprima, en quelques nobles paroles, ses vœux pour le bonheur de la nation, convia les États à travailler, en les engageant à remédier aux maux, sans se laisser entraîner au désir exagéré d'innovations, qui s'est emparé des esprits." The powers which were conferred upon the States-General were similar, both as regards their extent and their limitations, to those of the Duma, and the spirit in which they were given then was just the same as that in which they have been given here. The members of the States-General cheered the King. And the silence with which the members of the Duma met the Emperor recalls the phrase of the Bishop of Chartres to the National Assembly, after the taking of the Bastille, "Le silence du peuple est la leçon des rois." Unhappily the lesson is not generally learnt.

The Duma worked hard last week to finish the debate on the reply to the Speech from the Throne. The third reading was passed at three o'clock in the morning last Friday. It must be noted that the majority of the Duma seem to have made a grievous mistake in refusing to add a clause to their address deprecating the murder of policemen by anarchists; only five members of the Right supported this clause. Later on Friday morning the President of the Chamber asked for an audience of the Emperor, and it was

thought that no time would be lost in letting him present the address, since all Russia was waiting breathless for the event. Friday passed, Saturday also, and Sunday, and conflicting rumours as to the reception of the President by the Emperor were continually spreading in the city.

Late on Sunday night it became known that the Emperor had refused to receive the President and his deputation, and it was ordained that the address should be presented through official channels. The news was not believed at first. The blunder seemed too great. Somebody had prophesied to me on Sunday that such a course would be adopted, as a joke, never dreaming that it would really be the case. On Monday morning it was announced in the newspapers, and when I arrived at the Duma, I found that the place was in a state of agitation. "The Government is defying us," was the general expression. An official remarked that the farce was over; that the Duma would proceed to make a fool of itself by some explosion of violence, and discredit itself for ever. This did not occur. A short meeting of the party was held in one of the Committee rooms, and Professor Milioukov, in an eloquent speech, pointed out the extreme folly of any policy of violence, and his party agreed with him unanimously. This lasted about three-quarters of an hour. Then the debate opened; the President anounced the intimation he had received as regards his audience. M. Aladin made a speech in which he gave expression to the general resentment at the way in which the Duma had been treated. Professor Kovolievski analysed

the situation, and illustrated it with parallels from the procedure of other countries, and then the House went on to the business of the day with unruffled serenity.

Considering the intense bitterness of feeling created by the action of the Emperor, the behaviour of the Duma was miraculous in its good sense and moderation. But the fact that this action was received quietly does not wipe out its effect as an irreparable blunder. The peasants were more incensed than all, even the most conservative of the peasants. One of them said to me: "The Emperor would not receive our delegates," in a tone of deep resentment, and this evening the telegrams tell us that the feeling created in the provinces where the news has arrived is alarmingly bitter. It is a melancholy fact that if a course is fatal it will probably be taken. ..I have begun to think that the higher authorities here are destined to take no single step which is not fatal. When one reads the history of France, one understands people making the mistakes they made, as they had not the glaring example of the past before them; but it is hard to imagine how people who have read the history of France can persist in making the very same mistakes over again. Probably the Government relies—and perhaps rightly — on the troops when the inevitable struggle comes. I asked a peasant member of the Duma yesterday what he thought about that; he said that he had talked with many soldiers, and that they would refuse to fight if it was to be against the Duma. The peasant may be mistaken; he may be cherishing an illusion. But what is undeniable is the fact that

the existence of the Duma entirely changes the situation of the Army in the event of a great rising. Because the soldiers now know that, if the Duma falls, the struggle of the peasants for land and liberty is lost, and the cause of peasants is their cause, because they are peasants. In 1789 Paris was full of troops for the purpose of keeping order. Paris was like an armed camp. Eleven soldiers of the Guard were arrested in July for their opinions. The National Assembly demanded the dispersal of the troops, "dont la présence irritait les esprits," and Mirabeau, commenting on the line of conduct adopted by the advisers of the King, put the following question: "Ont-ils observé par quel funeste enchainement de circonstances les esprits les plus sages sont jetés hors des limites de la modération, et par quelle impulsion terrible un peuple enivré se précipite vers des excès, dont la première idée l'eût fait frémir?"

May 24th.

I was talking to-night with a very cultivated Russian officer whom I had known in Manchuria, who was a great admirer of Rudyard Kipling. He said the "Jungle Book" was one of his favourite books. He said he thought there was a certain kind of Jingoism to which he considered it weak on Rudyard Kipling's part to stoop. He did not mean the patriotism which inspired his work in the sense of praise of England; but the passages which were directed against other countries, such as France or Russia. He cited the story "The Man that Was." He said he knew a true story of an Englishman made

prisoner in the Crimean War. This Englishman had been very ill during his captivity and was taken care of by a Russian family. When peace was declared he returned to England. Two years afterwards he died, and his mother had been so touched by the way in which he had been looked after by the Russians with whom he had lived, and by the way he had always spoken of them, that she sent them a ring which had belonged to him and a lock of his hair. He gave me the names. He said he always wished to write and tell Kipling about this.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DEADLOCK

ST. PETERSBURG, *May 27th.*

EVENTS here are succeeding one another with such rapidity that by the time what one has written reaches England it is already out of date. Yesterday was the most important day there has been up to the present in the history of the Russian Parliament. We had been more or less prepared by the Press for the contents of the Address of the Prime Minister to the Duma; nevertheless, its uncompromising character, once it was revealed in black and white, was of the nature of a shock, even to the pessimistic. There are certain things in which one prefers not to believe until one sees them. The strangers' seats in the Duma were crowded yesterday, some time before the proceedings began at 2 p.m. The Ministers' bench was occupied. There was a feeling of suspense and repressed excitement in the air. While the Prime Minister was reading his declaration the silence was breathless. One felt that a year ago the declaration would have seemed an excellent one for an autocratic Government to have made. But now, as the expression of the views of a Constitutional Ministry, it was

like a slap in the face. One wondered, if these were the views of the Government, why it had taken the trouble to convene a Parliament. Ever since I have been here I have always derived one and the same impression from Government and Conservative circles: that they do not seem to reflect that it follows, if you convene a Parliament, that the result must be Parliamentary government. Their ideal seems to be Parliamentary institutions and autocratic Government. So far, all attempts that have been made in the history of the world to reconcile these two irreconcilable things have met with failure. In no wise discouraged by the example of the past, the Russian Government has made a further attempt in this direction. It is to be feared that it will be grievously disappointed, judging from the reception with which the Ministerial declaration was met yesterday afternoon.

M. Nabokov spoke first. He spoke clearly and calmly, without rhetoric or emphasis, and gave expression to the universal feeling of bitter disappointment. He was listened to in silence until he reached the question of amnesty, and then, when he said that the House considered this question to be one between itself and the Crown, and did not admit the interference or mediation of any third party with regard to it, the pent-up excitement of the House found release in tumultuous and prolonged applause. Likewise when he said that the House regarded the declaration of the Ministry as a direct challenge of defiance, and that they accepted the challenge, he could not continue for some time owing to the applause and the cheering. It was admitted on all sides that M. Nabokov's speech was

dignified and masterly, and expressed what everybody felt. He was followed by M. Rodichev, who indulged in elaborate and effective rhetoric. Too elaborate and too rhetorical, some people said; psychologically, however, I think it was wise to let M. Rodichev's tempestuous rhetoric follow immediately after M. Nabokov's cool decisiveness; because when a body of people finds itself in a tumultuous frame of mind, the tumult must find expression. M. Rodichev's speech reads exceedingly well; and judging by its result it was successful. M. Anikin spoke for the peasants, and M. Aladin gave vent to the feelings of the more violent members of the House. As an orator, he made a grave mistake in pitching his key too high; he began at the top of the pitch, so that when he wished to make a crescendo he overstepped the limit, and the whole house cried out "Enough! Enough!" After some moments of disorder he was allowed to finish his speech. The general impression was that he had gone too far. He would be twenty times as effective as an orator if he would curb his passion. The *Novoe Vremya* remarks to-day that it is said that M. Aladin's oratory is considered to be English in style. M. Aladin has spent eight years in England.

The most successful speech of the day, judging from its reception, was that of Professor Kovolievski, who pointed out that for the Government to speak of the impossibility of expropriation was an insult to the Emperor Alexander II., who had carried out the biggest act of expropriation the world had ever seen. His speech was at the same time extremely sensible and passionately eloquent. He said, like Mirabeau of yore,

that the Duma would not go until it was turned out by force, and that in reminding the House that an act of amnesty was the prerogative of the Crown, the Ministry were, as a constitutional body, offending the Monarch by giving the impression that should no amnesty be given it was the Emperor's will, and that therefore not they, but the Emperor should insist on their resignation. The House adjourned at 7.30, after having passed their momentous vote of censure.

The situation is, therefore, now an impossible one. Matters have come to a complete deadlock. The Emperor has promised by his Manifesto of October 17th, and has ratified his promise in his Speech from the Throne, that no laws shall be passed without the consent of the Duma. The Government has made a declaration that it will take legislation into its own hands, and the Duma has replied by demanding its immediate resignation. Therefore, the Government will pass none of the Duma's laws, and the Duma will have nothing to do with the laws proposed by the Government. What can be the way out of this situation? The Government does not believe that the Duma is representative of Russia. The Duma believes that it is representative. The Government, I suppose, relies on the troops. They say the troops can be depended on for another two years.

ST. PETERSBURG, *May 28th.*

The following is the translation of a speech made by a peasant deputy named Losev in the Duma on Saturday last. It was the speech which was certainly the most appreciated by the peasants :—

"Until to-day I was moved by a feeling of deep joy. I thought that the moment had come when the resurrection day of our tired-out country would dawn. I thought that the voice of our distressful country would sound throughout the land, and would reach the ears of our Monarch. He had said in his graciousness that it was necessary to learn the needs of the country. I have the good fortune to be a representative of the people. Until to-day my heart felt joy. Now, I thought, we shall do without that hour of ruin which threatens the whole country; now, I thought, has come the happy time when the worn-out and suffering eyes of the peasant shall smile through his tears, the time which shall see the bettering of his country and of his life, when he shall no longer fear the threats of a Police Government, when he shall no longer live in poverty and famine. But now I will say that my joy was not of long duration. To-day it disappeared. To-day from this tribune I heard the terrible words pronounced by the Prime Minister. In clear and brief words he said that the solution of the land question proposed by the Duma was altogether out of the question. What did the Prime Minister pronounce to be out of the question? The contentment of the starving country? It is that Ministry in whose hands we are like dumb animals. And that offended me deeply, and I think that not I alone, but the whole country, was offended.

"I was glad when I heard the answer to the speech of our Sovereign the Emperor from the Throne about the resurrection of the country. But I repeat that my joy lasted only until to-day. To-day, my dears, I again

look upon our distressful country. She is once more threatened by a menacing cloud of gold uniforms. We see that a whole population, a hundred millions strong, lies under the yoke of a few individuals and can do nothing. Many express their sympathy for us on paper, but nobody can help us. They tell us that the fulfilment of our demands is impossible. I again put myself in the company of the poor peasantry, who, it is true, possess great strength. One can liken the peasantry to Samson, who possessed exceeding strength. By cunning they discovered what was the secret of his strength, and bereft him of it. They took us, too, by cunning, and by cunning they blinded us. I once more repeat therefore that it is a duty not to play tricks with a people a hundred million strong. When Samson felt the power of all the mockery of the Philistines he then said: 'Lead me; let me uphold the columns which support the building,' and, taking hold of one pillar with his right hand and one with his left, he said: 'Perish, my soul, together with the Philistines!' Who forced him to do this? If wicked Dalila had not blinded him, and had his strength not been impaired, he would not have wished to do this. They made a laughing-stock of him, and he said: 'Perish, my soul, together with the Philistines!' And then what? Those who played with him perished beneath the crashing building.

"All the labouring peasantry is in even such a critical situation. They treat it like a toy; but, my friends, I cannot guarantee that the unhappy Samson will support it. He will say: 'Perish, my soul, with the Philistines!'"

THE COMPOSITION OF THE DUMA

June 20th.

There are in the Duma thirty-five so-called "Moderates," a hundred and seventy-six Cadets, eighty-one belonging to no party (mostly peasants, with one or two independent gentlemen), about a hundred and twenty belonging to the Extreme Left, who now call themselves the Labour Party. Besides these there are the Autonomists, consisting of twenty-six Poles, six Lithuanians, four Esthonians, four Letts, two Ukrane, and ten Musalmans. If we look into these parties we see that the most prominent members of the Moderates are Count Heyden, a Constitutional Monarchist, who corresponds more or less to an English Whig, and has all his life played a prominent part in the Liberal movement, and especially in the Zemstvo meetings last year, and M. A. Stachovitch, also a Constitutional Monarchist, a member of the noblesse and a prominent Zemstvoist and champion of the Liberal movement.

Besides these two there are prominent men such as Prince Volkonsky, also a Constitutional Monarchist.

When people ask whether these men are capable of managing State affairs, the question seems to me to be rather this: Are they less or more capable of managing affairs than a man like M. Durnovo?

One of the most prominent members of the October Party is M. D. Schipov, who was not elected to the Duma —a Zemstvoist of great capacity.

Now let us look at the Cadets. The practical leader of the party is Professor Milioukov, the President of the Union of Unions—the founder of the party

which he still directs. The Government excluded him from the elections. But although he is not in the Duma, he is a man of first-class ability, practical and moderate; he possesses a complete grasp of the political situation. His colleague, M. Hessen, a lawyer of great ability, was also excluded from the elections.

In the Duma itself we have M. C. A. Muromtseff: Educated at Moscow and Göttingen, a professor of law, he was obliged to abandon his professorship in 1864 and take to private practice. He is now the President of the Duma, and there is not a dissentient voice in Russia, from the Court downwards, as to the superlative manner in which he fulfils his functions. He combines suave urbanity with rigid firmness, and has at present a complete hold over the Duma. M. I. Petrunkevitch: "The father of the Zemstvo," a strong Constitutionalist; one of the best speakers in Duma, in my opinion the best, and master of dry sarcasm. He corresponds to an English Liberal member of the House of Commons. M. F. F. Kokoshkin: A privat-docent of Moscow University, a Constitutional expert. His speeches are well composed and reasoned. M. V. D. Nabokov: Son of an ex-Minister of Justice; an expert in criminal law. He was dismissed from being *Kammer-junker* for his opinions. He is an excellent Parliamentary tactician and a good, clear speaker. M. F. I. Rodichev: A barrister, of Iver; one of the most prominent Zemstvoists; he presented to the Emperor the famous address of the Zemstva at the beginning of the reign asking for reforms, and received in answer the command to put away these senseless dreams. He was forbidden to live in St. Petersburg for two years. A

rhetorical speaker, rather like a rocket, sometimes bursting into stars, at others falling flat like a stick. M. L. Petrajitski: Professor of the Philosophy of Law. A lawyer and a writer. He speaks the soundest common sense; the temptation to listen to him can be resisted easily. M. Hertzenstein: A Russianised Jew. Privatdocent of Moscow University; took his degree in law; and was employed in the Moscow Agrarian Bank. An expert on financial and agrarian questions. M. N. Kareev: A prominent historian. M. Vinaver: An authority on civil law. M. N. N. Lvov: Educated in Switzerland, and took his degree in jurisprudence; a Zemstvoist and a large landed proprietor. Prince Dolgoroukov: The bearer of a historic name. These are, I think, the most prominent of the Cadets.

Together with the Cadets there is another small party who vote with the Cadets, called the Party of Democratic Reform; it contains two of the most capable men of the Duma. Professor Kovolievski: A scholar and an unrivalled authority on Parliamentary traditions. An eloquent speaker, who by the charm of his personality has become the most popular member of the Duma. M. B. V. Kousmin Karavaieff: A Zemstvoist, educated at the Academy of Military Law, at which he afterwards became a professor, until he was obliged to resign in 1904. At the request of General Kouropatkin he went to the war, where he held a responsible position; he is one of the best, if not the best, speaker in the Duma; quiet, persuasive, logical, and eloquent. Prince Urussoff, formerly employed in the Ministry of the Interior, also belongs to this party.

On the left is the Labour Party. M. Anikin: A village teacher; a social revolutionary, opposed to violence; he speaks eloquently. The abilities of this party seem to me entirely destructive and in no way constructive. M. Zhilkin: A peasant by extraction; subsequently a journalist; a tall man with big features, light hair, and spectacles. The tactical leader of his group. He speaks well and clearly. M. Aladin: Of peasant extraction, but educated at the University of Kazan, who emigrated to England. A violent and talented speaker; too violent to have influence in the Duma. His speeches are sometimes interrupted by cries of "Enough." One of the most interesting revolutionary figures.

The peasants either belong to no party at all or to the Labour Party. Those who belong to no party consider the Labour Party to be foolish. One of them said to me that they were anxious to meet the proprietors halfway, but the Government thwarted them by being so uncompromising. A great many of these peasants are exceedingly sensible. The Labour Party is utterly and fundamentally opposed to the Cadets, whom it despises. The situation of the Duma as regards the Government, by which it is practically ignored, continues to be abnormal; for this reason, and owing to the fact that any active move on the part of the Government unites the whole Duma in unanimity against it, the creation of further parties is rendered difficult. The level of speaking in the Duma is high; a competent English Judge here says it is considerably higher than the English level. Time has certainly been wasted in talk; but the Right, and neither the Cadets nor the Labour Party, have been to blame for this, and also the abnormal situation of the Duma.

As to the current of opinion outside the Duma. The attitude of the Government, that the Duma is merely a revolutionary meeting from which nothing serious can be expected, is reflected in Conservative circles with this difference: that, while holding this opinion, they blame the Government for its action. Analogies with past history may be misleading, but, however different the revolutionary element here may be from that which made the French Revolution, the Conservative element here is startlingly like the Conservative element in France in 1789.

Professor Aulard writes as follows about Louis XVI.: "Ce n'était pas un esprit supérieur. Les royalistes le disaient bête, parce qu'ils le voyaient physiquement épais . . . dormeur, mangeur, . . . mais il ne manquait pas d'intelligence, et sa proclamation aux Français, qui est bien son œuvre personnelle, offre une critique de la Constitution de 1791 beaucoup plus fine que celle que, de nos jours, Taine en a écrite. Voici en quoi son intelligence fut inférieure à sa tâche: c'est qu'il ne comprit pas qu'avec le système nouveau et le droit populaire, il pouvait être un roi tout aussi puissant, tout aussi glorieux, tout aussi roi, qu'avec le système ancien et le droit divin."

This last sentence explains the whole attitude of the Conservatives here. They do not understand that if you have constitutional institutions you must have a constitutional Government. A man who calls himself a Monarchical Liberal said to me the other day that the Duma did not represent the majority of Russians, who were moderate, and that the elections were to blame because the Government had not taken the necessary

steps to influence them in the right direction, as was always done in other countries, including England. This view, which is largely shared here, revealed to me the truth of what some one else said to me not long ago: that Russians of the upper classes here are often more cultivated than the upper classes of other countries; but they have no more idea of the nature of constitutional government than the Turks.

On the other hand you have the revolutionaries outside the Duma, who have no real notion of constitutional government either, attacking the Cadets with unbridled violence every day, because they say that they are the only bulwark against revolution. Therefore between these two dismal extremes we have only the Cadets; capable and well organised it is true; the question is, How long can they remain masters of such a situation?

June 2nd.

To-night I had a long talk with M. Aladin, the Radical deputy. He gives me a totally different impression from the usual Russian "Intelligent." He has been Anglicised. I don't mean to say this has made him superior to his countrymen, but it has made him different. He complained of the want of practical energy among the Russians. They had not got, he said, enough to satisfy an English child.

A friend was sitting with him—a musician, and at one moment they compared pistols, when the musician began gesticulating with a revolver. I felt nervous because Russians are so careless with firearms. M. Aladin said that in England there were precedents and

prejudices about everything; here they were fighting in order to establish their precedents and their prejudices.

I asked him whether, since he knew England well, he thought political liberty was really a great advantage, and whether the great *liberté de mœurs* enjoyed by Russians did not compensate for the *habeas corpus*. He said he wasn't certain whether political liberty was worth having, but he was convinced it was worth fighting for.

Nobody can possibly accuse this man either of talking nonsense or of being a *doctrinaire*, but he seems to me a square peg in a round hole, as Kislitzki was in the war.

He does not seem to evaporate in talk. His manner is mild, almost gentle, and you at once feel he has unlimited energy. That is to say, he is just the opposite of the ordinary "Intelligent" revolutionary, who is all words and no deeds.

CHAPTER XX

CURRENT IDEAS ON THE DUMA

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 3rd.*

"THE Duma is impossible," said the Frenchman. "In what country of the world are people who commit murder amnestied? And the land question—violent measures such as the Cadets propose will ruin the country. Agrarian reforms can only be gradual."

A young man who had lately joined the Cadet party started to his feet. "You forget," he said, "that we are in the midst of a Revolution; that it is not a question of what other countries do in times of peace and prosperity. What is called amnesty here is called justice in other countries, and as for doing things gradually, it is too late. The Ministers come to the Duma and speak of gradual reform. It is like telling a person who has got appendicitis to go to the Riviera and enjoy the sunshine. Matters have been brought to such a pass that a drastic remedy is imperative. The very people who preach to us now that prevention is better than cure are those who during fifty years refused to prevent."

"As for the amnesty question," said the man who belonged to no Party, "I refuse to discuss it. Both

sides tire me with it. You," he said, turning to the Cadet, "with your hysterical bomb-throwers, and you," turning to the mild Conservative landlord, "with your bungling police. The question of amnesty is absurd, because very few criminals are in prison at all. The bomb-throwers nearly always either get killed or escape altogether. The mass of people who are in prison are there by chance. They might be in the Duma; it is a mere fluke. At Tambov the other day a clerk whom I know of went to take steps about the raising of his wages. He was arrested, together with the man who drove him, and the son of that man. They have been in prison ever since. No sort of accusation has been brought against them."

"And don't you call that a disgraceful state of things?" said the young Cadet.

"I was thinking of the amnesty as it affects the Government," answered the man who belonged to no Party, "and I repeat that as far as danger goes it makes no difference one way or the other."

"But as a question of principle it is impossible," said the Frenchman.

"Yes, impossible not to give it," said the Cadet.

"What do you think of the Cadets?" said the man who belonged to no Party to the ex-official who belonged to the landed gentry. "I could not vote for them or against them," he answered. "I feel with regard to them exactly as I feel with regard to the Japanese; the same combination of admiration and disgust. I feel humiliated at recognising myself to be their inferior, and proud at being in some respects their superior. I believe that there is the same difference

between myself and a Cadet as there is between a Mandarin and a Japanese. Perhaps the social value of Chinese philosophy in not incomparable to the French Eighteenth Century strain, which is still so strong in us. At any rate, going back to the Cadets and the Japanese, don't you see a likeness between the faculty of organisation that both of them possess, the grasp of technical means, the near-sighted enthusiasm? Parallels between the *ci-devant* Russian and the Chinese have been worn threadbare. But now we are face to face with the extraordinary situation of having, as it were, Japanese and Chinamen in the same country struggling for prevalence. This is why I could neither vote for the Cadets nor against them. I feel that they are a superior and at the same time an inferior race, to whom one must leave the dirty business of governing the country just as the Merovingian Kings did with the Mayors of the Palace, reserving to themselves the faculty of healing scrofula and the divine right of remaining Kings."

"I don't feel that," said the man who belonged to no Party; "the difference between us and all Europeans and the Japanese seems to me to be a difference of kind; they are as different from us as bees are different from men. The difference between you and the Cadets is merely a difference of class and of education."

"I could get on perfectly well with the Cadets," said the ex-official, "just as I could get on with the clerks who used to be in my office. If I were the Emperor I would prefer a Cadet Government to a Conservative one. But, for their weal or woe, Russia is not Cadet. The Cadets can reform Russia if they choose just as the

Japanese can reform China. But just as the Japanese will never make the Chinaman Japanese in character, so the Cadets will never make Russia Cadet."

"I don't agree with you," said the Cadet. "The same argument might have been used by an *Intendant* at the beginning of the French Revolution with regard to the Tiers État. They no doubt said then that the Tiers État represented nothing, because it had not been allowed to represent anything up to that moment. The same thing is true here. The Tiers État has been suppressed politically, and owing to this suppression it has burst out. It is far bigger than you think, because all your minor mandarins and some of your major mandarins belong to it and form part of it. Only yesterday I heard a reactionary complaining bitterly that all the officials in St. Petersburg sympathised with the Cadets, which was scandalous considering that they received Government wages. Besides this, the Cadets include all the intellect of the country and all the most intelligent men. They have partisans drawn from every class."

"I disagree with you," said the man who belonged to no Party to the ex-official, "on different grounds. I believe the Cadets to be just as Russian as you are, in the sense of being different from mere Westerners. The other day a charming old Cadet gentleman whom I know had some friends to dinner. They began playing *windt* at nine o'clock in the evening and they went on playing until eleven o'clock the next morning without stopping. In what other country would that happen? Certainly not in England or in France."

"Grattez le Cadet et vous trouverez le Russe,"

answered the ex-official. "Perhaps if you scratch the Japanese you will get at the Chinaman."

"Surely not," said the man who belonged to no Party; "but apart from this the antagonism between officialdom and the Tiers État is not a thing exclusively Russian. It has happened in every country. The end of the struggle is that officialdom or lawlessness is put under control. That is what is happening here. Peter the Great was the first Cadet, only he was self-sufficient and had need of no Party."

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 9th.*

There is a current of opinion which is hostile to the Duma, and I have lately had the opportunity of seeing manifestations of it. The views of the Ministry have now been made plain to us and need no comment; but one of the ideas which form the basis of their attitude and their action is suggestive, namely, that Count Witte is entirely responsible for the present state of things, in not having introduced universal suffrage, which, if it had been applied during the elections, say the Ministers, would have produced a majority in the Duma infinitely less Radical than the present one. I cannot help feeling slightly amused when I hear this catchword solemnly repeated, because when I was here before the elections at Christmas time, the same people who repeat it used equally solemnly to explain to me then the utter impossibility and the terrible danger of universal suffrage. Personally, I am convinced that whatever the system of suffrage had been, the majority would have been Radical, because the majority of the country is Radical. That is to say, there is in the country a large majority

of discontented people. Nobody, I think, can refute this proposition. It was confirmed to me the other day by an intelligent Conservative. When I say Conservative, I mean that he belongs to none of the Liberal parties. He explained his point of view to me thus: "I dislike the Cadets," he said; "they inspire me with a profound antipathy; I think they have played a double game in their dealings with the Left; I think they drew a line to the Right, and none to the Left; that they promised more than they could give. They said more in their propaganda than they now say in the Duma. On the other hand, we have nothing better than them. Besides them we have only the Government, which is not worth mentioning, and the Extreme Left, which is demented. Again, I think they really do contain the most intelligent men we have got in Russia now—the best brains, the best workers, and the best organisers—and I could only hope for a peaceful issue if the Emperor were to support them. I consider them the sole bulwark against Anarchy."

I asked him what he thought of their attitude towards the land question.

"I don't think the land question can be settled by any one project," he answered, "because the conditions are so different in various parts of Russia. The Cadets talk of local committees and of the necessity of expropriation in principle. I think what the peasants want is capital, not land. When the agitation began my peasants came to me and asked for five thousand dessiatines. I offered them one thousand, and then they found that five hundred was all they could manage to cultivate. I think, of course, that all the land which is rented

should be expropriated, and I think the folly of the Government in ignoring the question of the land rented to the peasants was supreme. The Government thinks it can remedy the present evils by drastic means, but they leave the cause of the evils untouched, which is this: there is a mass of discontented people in Russia, and as long as they remain discontented the disorder will continue. There are some things which could be done at once to render the peasants less discontented. They can be given rights if they cannot be given land. They are now at the mercy of the local magistrate."

The net result of this man's opinion was that it is a choice of evils, and the Cadets are the lesser evil. Yesterday I had a talk with a man who bitterly attacked the Cadets and all their ways. He was a member of the Duma and belongs to the Left. He spoke in this strain: "The Cadets insist on acting legally. It is sheer cowardice. In times of revolution the only effective action is illegal action. The Cadets have no right to call themselves the Party of the freedom of the people. They are nothing but Moderate Liberals."

"But what do you think they ought to have done?" I asked. "When the Government refuses to consider our Bills," he answered, "except according to a process and after a space of time which they determine, we ought to pass them in defiance of the Ministry and let them dissolve us."

"But, supposing they don't dissolve you?" I asked. I don't know what his answer was, because this conversation took place in the lobby of the Duma, and the spokesman, who was a Cossack member (not a man with a shock of hair and golden sequins or silver braid

on his coat, but a pale, thin, short man, with large bright eyes and no collar), had such a fiery and emphatic delivery that a large crowd collected round us, and one of the crowd entered with him into a heated argument, of which I heard fragments. "We have done nothing," he said. "We have been here a month and talked." "What else could we do?" said his interlocutor; "the Government take no notice of us." "We ought to declare ourselves a Constituent Assembly. The people of St. Petersburg are like ducks who have been fired at. They are afraid of the sight of blood. But the Government needn't think they have got the best of us, not those silly little gramophones (this to his interlocutor) who repeat what the Cadets say, but us, the representatives of the people; we shall have a nice surprise for them. We have got terrible means at our disposal without even appealing to the people. That's the worst of us Russians: we know how to talk, how to write; they translate our books into foreign languages; but we don't know how to act. I mean the educated Russians, the Cadets; but we are going to show that we do know how to act. Every day for the last month I have acted in a certain direction."

The rest of the philippic was lost to me. One of the arguers, who had just joined the Cadet Party, and being a young official was frightfully proud of the fact, seemed somewhat mortified at being called a "little gramophone." The temper of the Duma, although its outward behaviour is decorous, seems to be rising in temperature. The majority is in favour of moderation, and at present the majority is powerful. The Government has been treating the Duma like a spoilt child which needs humouring.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BEGINNING OF DISORDER

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 16th.*

THERE can be no doubt that the political atmosphere has in the last two days become sultry. The tension of feeling in the Duma has ominously increased, and the feeling of the country has manifested itself in increasing disorders. Even among the troops mutinies have been reported from five different towns, and the sailors at the various ports are said to be in a dangerously excited state. It is now little more than a month since the Duma met, and by looking back one can judge to a certain degree of the effect its existence has had on the nation at large. Some people say the Duma has done nothing but talk. It seems to me it would be rather difficult for a Parliament, especially a new one, to pass measures of a complicated and important nature in dumb show. Even the House of Commons, after centuries of experience, has not arrived at this. There are four Bills in committee at this moment. The agrarian question is, it is true, being discussed at length before the committee has drafted the Bill. But it should be borne in mind that the situation of the present Duma is abnormal. It pro-

poses to elaborate measures based on certain principles which the Government have declared to be inadmissible.

The Government morally deny the existence of the Duma. A Minister goes so far as to request a newspaper correspondent to state in the influential organ he represents that the Parliament which has been summoned by his Sovereign is no better than a revolutionary meeting, and that it is the result of the revolutionary machinations of his immediate predecessor in office. Besides this, the official organ of the Government publishes telegrams—which, even if they are not (as there is strong reason to suppose) manufactured in St. Petersburg or written to order by willing officials, can only be representative of a small fraction of popular opinion—inciting the population against the Duma, and begging the Emperor to dissolve it. When one reads these telegrams one is convinced that they cannot represent a widely-spread opinion, for they run somewhat after this fashion: "Great, unlimited autocrat, listen to us true Russians, dissolve the herd of rebels, who by means of Jewish money have usurped the position of representatives of the people. Pay no attention to their seditious cries, but listen rather to us, whose only wish is that thy Heaven-given, anointed, unlimited, multitudinous, incarnadined autocratitude should remain unlimited. Give us less bread and more taxes. We are perfectly contented. We have everything our heart desires, so long as thou remainest unlimited."

If the British Cabinet were to circulate among the Army an invitation to destroy the House of Commons,

full of insulting strictures on the members of the House, we should not consider this action to be constitutional. But this is what the Russian Government has been doing during the last month. The situation of a Parliament which has to deal with such a Ministry is abnormal. What guarantee is there that the Ministry will not dissolve it at any minute and change the electoral law? Not, certainly, the fact that this would be illegal and unconstitutional. Therefore, on these grounds, and in these circumstances, it seems to me that the action of the members of the Duma, in insisting on having their "say out" on the land question before anything else happens, is not so needless and not such a waste of time as it at first appears to be. The speeches of the members are reported in full, published in the newspapers, and read all over the country, and therefore if the Duma is dissolved suddenly the country will be already acquainted with the opinions and intentions of the Duma on the land question. This is why the fact that the Duma has existed and spoken out during a month is in itself one of paramount importance and likely to be big with far-reaching results. When the Duma met the Russian people echoed the French poet's cry that "une grande espérance a traversé le monde," but they were doubtful as to its efficacy. Now that it has met during a whole month, and that people within its walls have really been able to speak their minds on burning topics without being arrested, and have in no uncertain tones expressed their opinion of the present Government, the effect has been enormous.

Last night I was driven home by a cabman who

favoured me with his political views. I attach far more importance to the views of any cabman in St. Petersburg than to those of any of the Ministers, because they are more intimately acquainted with popular opinion. The cabman first expressed his appreciation of the fact that some people in Russia had too much land and others too little. Count Ignatieff's estate, he said, was a hundred versts long, and he had eight estates. The Duma, he continued, was demanding land and liberty. I objected that the Duma might be dissolved. "They won't dare," he replied. "But if they do dare?" I said. "Then we shall kill them," he answered. "Kill whom?" "Why, all the rich." "But will the soldiers be on your side?" I asked. "The soldiers are peasants, too," he said. "But before they shot at the people," I said. "Before they did not understand what it was all about. Now they know," he said. "Go into any *tractir* (public-house) you like," he continued, "and you will hear how the people are screaming."

Some weeks ago a change in the spirit of the Army, owing to the existence of the Duma, was not improbable. It appears to be now on the way towards realisation. Some of the Guards regiments are said, on the other hand, to be highly incensed against the Duma. One of the peasant members told me that his brother, who is in a regiment here, informed him that the strictest surveillance was being exercised on the movements and on the correspondence of the soldiers. He said some of the regiments in St. Petersburg would be for the Duma, but only the minority. I think it must be difficult for people who have never been here, either

in the past or in the present, to realise that although the old *régime* has not yet been destroyed there is an enormous difference in the general state of things owing to the fact that up to last year the expression of public opinion was impossible, and that now it is not only re-echoed under the protection of the Duma all over Russia but finds a vehicle in innumerable newspapers and pamphlets, not one of which is without what the Germans call a "Tendenz." Every bit of fiction, verse, satire, history, anecdote that is now published is definitely and purposely revolutionary. The non-political part of every newspaper is therefore practically devoted to politics. Every day, and twice a day, the same string is sounded. Everything in Russia now is tinged with one colour, and that colour is bright red.

June 14th.

In the following dialogue I have tried to formulate the views of those who have no sympathy with the Liberal movement in Russia :—

"I would prefer to hold my tongue," said the cosmopolitan philosopher who had just arrived at St. Petersburg, when he was asked for his opinion on the political situation. "I do not want to have chairs thrown at my head."

"We never throw chairs," said the ex-official. "Either bombs or nothing. But before you say it I know what you are going to say. There are two classes of people in the world: Liberals and Conservatives, if you like, and there is also a third class. The third class consists of what I call recalcitrant Liberals; they become Con-

servative not because they are Conservative by nature but because they dislike Liberals and enjoy disagreeing with them; but say what you think and confirm the truth of my diagnosis." "I will," said the philosopher, "only don't throw chairs at my head. All that is going on in Europe at present seems to me to be contained in the formula: Liberty is the tyranny of the rabble. The equation may work itself out more or less quickly, but it is bound to triumph. And as intelligent people favour liberty I have gone over to the side of the idiots. They produced an opéra-bouffe in 1870, I think, called 'Le trône d'Écosse, ou la difficulté de s'asseoir dessus.' The title was pleasing, but the figure of the King of Scotland was more delightful still. He was, I will not say troubled, for it did not inconvenience him in the least, but let us say characterised, by softening of the brain in an advanced stage, and whatever might be going on he quietly slept through it, only waking up now and then to exclaim emphatically 'Pas de concessions!' I entirely sympathise with him. I feel exactly like the King of Scotland, and I don't care a straw whether I am right or wrong. Right or wrong concerns our judging faculty, which is a poor affair at its best, if it concerns anything at all. Siding in practice with one party or another concerns our passions, our habits, our tastes, and our private interests. If we have privileges we are there to defend them and not to bother, like clergymen and professors, whether they are right or wrong. We may be beaten; at least let us be beaten fighting. Vive la réaction!" "That is a point of view I can understand," said the man who belonged to no Party, "but let us ask our friend (he pointed to the

ex-official) who, although often accused by his friends of having regicide principles, has never been insulted by being called a Liberal, whether he feels like that with regard to Russia now." "Yes," answered the philosopher, "please tell me if you think my formula applies to the present situation, and whether you agree?" "Let me start by saying that I entirely agree with your formula," said the ex-official; "at least I did until a fortnight ago, when I realised (I was staying at the Savoy Hotel in London) that I had become (like Kips at the Grand Hotel) a Socialist. My conversion, however, is so recent and I have spent so many years in deriding Socialism that I can, without any difficulty, speak from my ancient standpoint. Well, I think your formula, with which I so deeply sympathise, is not applicable to Russia at present. At least it is applicable, if you choose to apply it, but it is as far removed from what I feel as the diametrically opposed view of the English Liberal Press. I do not regard the existing struggle as being one between aristocratic and democratic principles. It is the struggle between one half of the middle class, the Mandarins, with the Government and the higher Mandarins at their head, and the other half, the professors, the doctors, the lawyers. Above this struggle the aristocracy floats as a nebulous mist, like the gods when they returned to the Twilight of Valhalla, and beneath it the proletariate and the peasantry have been roused from their slumbers by the noise of the fight. My point of view is very simple. I believe, as a statesman once said, that the Russian Government is an autocracy tempered by assassination. I hope that the professors will, with the help of the peasantry and

the proletariate, create a big enough disturbance to destroy the existing Government and prepare the way for a real autocracy. Then, and not until then, I shall cry 'Vive la réaction!' According to you I ought to die fighting for my higher Mandarins; but you admit it is only a question of one's passions; well, my passions are turned against them. I hate them. Of course I would have fought for Louis XVIII. or Charles II.; but I should have drawn the line at Charles X., and I should have been rewarded by the result of the subsequent revolution." "I don't think you either of you realise," said the man who belonged to no Party, "that just as the battle of Valmy (which didn't seem very important to contemporaries except to Goethe, who realised what had happened in a flash) was the beginning of a new age, so was the universal strike here in October last the beginning of another. I think all your talk about autocrats, &c., is amusing, but so very old-fashioned. I don't think there will ever be such things —again."

"But there are such things," said the ex-official. "Mr. Balfour ruled England far more despotically than the most unlimited autocrat."

"Yes, but that is the kind of thing which I believe is on the eve of disappearance," said the man who belonged to no Party. "I believe, and of course the wish is not only father to the thought—but I wish hard in order that the thought may come true—I believe that we are on the eve of a social revolution, and that besides this Russia will split up into separate parts. I hope this will happen. Had I been an Englishman, I should have been a little Englander with a vengeance. I should like

to go back to the Heptarchy. I admire the England of Shakespeare and Drake, which was little, more than the England of Kipling and Rhodes, which is big. I admire the Germany of Goethe and Beethoven more than the Germany of William II.—and whom? There is no one else to mention. The same with Russia. All that we have derived from ideals of expansion has ended in disaster. If we split up, who knows what the Duchy of Transbaikalia and the Kingdom of Kalouga, for instance, and the Republic of Morshansk may not produce?" "But," said the philosopher, "what will happen if the power falls into the hands of angry demagogues of the Extreme Left? What if they behave as the Convention behaved, and, more reasonably, what if you have all the tyranny of a Convention and none of the terror? All the inconvenience and none of the excitement? In Russia you boast of the *liberté de mœurs* you enjoy; don't you think you run a risk of losing it?" "It is true, of course," said the man who belonged to no Party, "that we run a risk of losing it, but I have a great faith in the invincible plasticity of the Russian character. And liberty of manners seems to me to depend on national characteristics and not on national institutions. You can prove, of course, that liberty of manners and liberty of thought flourish abundantly under autocratic *régimes* such as those of Nero and Nicholas II., but does it necessarily follow that it cannot exist under lawful and disciplined administration? Ancient Greece and Modern England are two cases in point where personal liberty such as that which we enjoy in Russia is non-existent. 'Il ne faut pas l'oublier,' says Renan, 'Athènes avait bel et bien l'inquisition.' As to Anglo-

Saxon countries there is no more amusing spectacle in the world than that which is offered to us when a member of the Slav race seeks refuge in Anglo-Saxon countries burning with enthusiasm for the mothers of freedom. Witness Maxim Gorky's arrival in America. He soon finds out that he is enclosed in a brick wall of prohibitions, and perhaps he thinks with regret of his native country, where, although he was not allowed to insult his Monarch at a public meeting, he could do exactly what he liked. The rigidity of conventions in England seems to me to arise from the English character, which is rigid and likes convention; but the Russian character is not rigid; it is pliant and draws no line anywhere. That is at once all its strength and all its weakness. Whatever gets the upper hand in Russia, be it a convention, a board of Socialists, or a committee of peasants, I am convinced of one thing, that the members of this Government will never dress for dinner when they feel disinclined or go to bed before they wish to do so." "But," said the philosopher, "if you possess personal liberty why bother about the rest? After all, free political institutions presuppose a certain amount of order and discipline. If you are without this order and discipline, and if you do not wish for the drawbacks of order and discipline, why do you make a fuss to get what can only exist by order and discipline?"

"If we had been properly governed," said the ex-official, "nobody would have thought about it."

"The two things are not incompatible," said the man who belonged to no Party. "You can have free political institutions sufficiently ordered and disciplined, and you can also have personal liberty. If these two

things have never been combined before, we will be the first people to combine them."

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 19th.*

On Sunday last I went by train to a place called Terrioki, in Finland, where a meeting was to be held by the Labour Party of the Duma. The train was crowded with people who looked more like holiday-makers than political supporters of the Extreme Left—so crowded that one had to stand up on the platform outside the carriage throughout the journey. It is of no consequence in Russia how many people there are in a train or what they do. In England there is an impressive warning in the railway carriages about being fined a sum not exceeding forty shillings. In Russia there is also a quantity of printed rules. The difference is this —in England, if you infringed the rules, something would be sure to happen. In Russia nobody pays the slightest attention to any rule and nothing happens. You are not fined a sum not exceeding forty shillings; on the other hand, a young man not long ago, owing to the habit he had acquired—a habit universally practised by passengers on the line—of jumping out of the train long before it had reached the station, slipped on the step, and was nearly killed. This is a small instance of what people mean when they allude to the personal liberty prevalent in Russia. It is also an explanation of the existence of the quantity of printed regulations you see in Russia. The authorities print a hundred rules in the hope that one of them may meet with attention. None of them commands attention. I will give another small instance. If a stranger to

Europe came to Europe and to England and tried to get into the House of Commons without a ticket and without being acquainted with a member, he would find it, I think, impossible to obtain admittance. If he went to Russia he could, if he said nothing at all, walk into the Duma without the slightest difficulty. The whole secret of avoiding bothers in Russia is not to bother people who do not wish to be bothered. If you do what you wish to do quietly nobody interferes with you. If you ask you will probably be told it is impossible—it is in theory, but not in practice.

But to go back to the political meeting in Finland. After a journey of an hour and a quarter we arrived at Terrioki. The crowd leapt from the train and immediately unfurled red flags and sang the "Marseillaise." The crowd occupied the second line, and a policeman observed that, as another train was coming in and would occupy that line, it would be advisable if they were to move on. "What, police even here in free Finland?" somebody cried. "The police are elected here by the people," was the pacifying reply, and the crowd moved on, formed into a procession six abreast, and started marching to the gardens where the meeting was to be held, singing the "Marseillaise" and other songs all the way. The dust was so abundant that, after marching with the procession for some time, I took a cab and told the driver to take me to the meeting. We drove off at a brisk speed past innumerable wooden houses, villas, shops (where Finnish knives and English tobacco are sold) into a wood. After we had driven for twenty minutes I asked the driver if we still had far to go. He turned round and,

smiling, said in pidgin-Russian (he was a Finn), "Me not know where you want go." Then we turned back, and, after a long search and much questioning of passers-by, found the garden, into which one was admitted by ticket. (Here, again, any one could get in.) In a large grassy and green garden, shady with many trees, a kind of wooden semicircular proscenium had been erected, and in one part of it was a low and exiguous platform not more spacious than a table. On the proscenium the red flags were hung. In front of the table there were a few benches, but the greater part of the public stood and formed a large crowd. The inhabitants of the villas were here in large numbers; there were not many workmen, but a number of students and various other members of the "Intelligenzia"; young men with undisciplined hair and young ladies in large *art nouveau* hats and *Reformkleider*. (I wonder whether this last-mentioned garment has penetrated to London.) M. Jilkin, the leader of the Labour Party in the Duma, took the chair.

The meeting was opened by a man who laid stress on the necessity of a Constituent Assembly. The speeches succeeded one another. Students climbed up into the pine-trees and on the roof of the proscenium. Others lay on the grass behind the crowd. "Land and Liberty" was the burden of the speeches. There was nothing new or striking said. The hackneyed commonplaces were rolled out one after another. Indignation, threats, menaces, blood and thunder. And all the time the sun shone hotter and "all Nature looked smiling and gay." The audience applauded, but no fierceness of invective, no torrent of rhetoric managed

to make the meeting a serious one. Nature is stronger than speeches, and sunshine more potent than rant. It is true the audience were enjoying themselves; but they were enjoying the outing, and the speeches were an agreeable incidental accompaniment; they enjoyed the attacks on the powers that be, as the Bank-holiday maker enjoys Aunt Sally at the seaside. Some Finns spoke in Russian and Finnish, and then M. Aladin, the prominent member of the Duma, made a real speech. As he rose he met with an ovation. M. Aladin is of peasant extraction. He passed through the University in Russia, emigrated to London, was a dock labourer, a printer's devil, a journalist, an electrical engineer, a teacher of Russian; he speaks French and German perfectly, and English so well that he speaks Russian with a London accent. M. Aladin has, as I have said, a great contempt for the methods of the Russian revolutionaries, and he expressed something of it on this occasion. He said that only people without any stuff in them would demand a Constituent Assembly. "You don't demand a Constituent Assembly, you constitute it," he said. "It was humiliating," he continued, "that citizens of a big country like Russia should be obliged to come to Finland in order to speak their minds freely. It was time to cease being a people of slaves, and time to be a revolutionary people. The Russian people would never be free until they showed by their acts that they meant to be free." M. Aladin speaks without any gesticulation. He is a dark, shortish man, with a small moustache and grey serious eyes, short hair, and a great command of incisive mordant language. His oratory is, as I have said before,

English in style. On this occasion it was particularly nervous and pithy. He did not, however, succeed in turning that audience of holiday-makers into a revolutionary meeting. The inhabitants of the villas clapped. The young ladies in large hats chortled with delight. It was a glorious picnic; an ecstatic game of Aunt Sally. And when the interval came the public rushed to the restaurants. There was one on the sea-shore, with a military band playing. There was a beach and a pier and boats and bathers. Here was the true inwardness of the meeting. Many people remained on the beach for the rest of the afternoon. The Social Democrats who had been present were displeased with M. Aladin's speech. Groups formed in the garden. People lay down on the grass, and political discussions were held by recumbent speakers. When they reached a certain pitch of excitement they knelt.

Two men attracted my attention by the heated argument in which they were engaged, kneeling opposite each other in a circle of recumbent listeners. Presently a bell rang and the meeting was resumed. I said to one of the arguers: "Why do you all quarrel so much? You are disunited, and there is only one Government." He took me aside and explained his views. He was a tall, bearded, intelligent-looking man, a native of the Urals; he had been a soldier and an engineer, and had had to leave the country for his opinions. He had educated himself in France, Germany, and Belgium, and had attended a Labour Congress in London. He was a Social Democrat. He said this meeting was absurd. "You see the real workmen can't come to a meeting like this; it's too expensive.

I was disappointed in Aladin's speech. I think he is unfair in blaming us for being feeble compared with the French revolutionaries. The circumstances are different. We have the proletariate here, and that important fact makes a great difference." I asked him if he thought there would be a social revolution in Russia. He said he thought Socialism must be adopted by all countries at the same moment. He thought that the Russian people were less capable of introducing it than any people. "When these people talk the poverty of their thought appals me," he said. "And then the monotony of the tragic note—never a gleam of humour; never a touch of irony. Count Heyden is the only man in the Duma who shows any signs of it. Look at our Government, they lay themselves open to ridicule. By ridicule one can pulverise them; nobody thinks of doing it, and the strain of this long-drawn-out tragic emphasis is intolerable. Yes, I was disappointed in Aladin. But the first time I saw him I was convinced that he would play a part in the Russian Revolution. It is a good thing that such men should be. Gapon, however much we may blame him, played a great part." I found he thoroughly disbelieved in the Cadets and believed only in the proletariate. Later on other speeches were made denouncing the Cadets and the foreign loan, and a resolution was passed repudiating it. The meeting went on till past seven o'clock, and then the mass of people returned to St. Petersburg, having thoroughly enjoyed their picnic.

I went to the Duma yesterday afternoon and heard some of the speeches of the much-abused Cadets. It was like listening to Mr. Asquith and Mr. Haldane

after a dose of Hyde Park oratory. But because people appear to one to talk nonsense that is no proof that they will not get the upper hand. "Vous êtes des verbiageurs," said the Duc de Biron to the revolutionary tribunal. They guillotined him nevertheless. And Danton said that Robespierre was not capable "de faire cuire un œuf." Yet Robespierre played a part in the Revolution.

CHAPTER XXII

PRINCE URUSSOFF'S SPEECH

ST. PETERSBURG, *June 22nd.*

THE speech made by Prince Urussoff last Friday in reply to the Minister of the Interior is generally considered here to be the most important utterance which has as yet been made within the walls of the Duma. Prince Urussoff occupied for a short period a post in the Ministry of the Interior during the late Ministry. His speech is not only important from the fact of its being authoritative, and because it throws a startlingly interesting light on some of the causes of the Jewish massacres, but also because it reveals the evil which is practically at the root of all the trouble in Russia.

"REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE,—I rise to submit to your consideration a few observations regarding the question put to the Ministry by the Duma and the answer to that question which we have just heard. I presume that we are considering the information respecting a printing-press concealed in the recesses of the Police Department, by which proclamations to the people are printed inciting them to civil war, not so much in the light of a fact which

belongs to the past and interests us only so far as the responsibility of certain individuals is concerned, but rather in the light of an alarming question as to a possibility of the further participation of Government officials in the preparation of those sanguinary tragedies for which we have been notorious during a dismal epoch, and which, as the events of the last few days have shown, continue to occur, to the indignation of all those to whom human life and the fair fame of the Russian Empire are precious. Let me state at the outset that I do not for a moment doubt of the sincerity of the declaration made by the Minister of the Interior, and that the words which I wish to say to you are not directed against the Ministry.

"On the contrary, the whole significance, the whole interest, the whole importance of the question at issue lie precisely in the fact that massacres and civil strife, owing to the circumstances now obtaining, continue and will continue, quite independently of the action taken with regard to them by one Minister of the Interior or another, or by one Ministry or another. With regard to this point the declaration of the Minister of the Interior does not seem to me convincing, and I will now try to explain why, with this end in view, I must deal with the question of the massacres, and try to unravel and explain the part played in them by the printing-press which was the subject of our question.

"By a careful investigation of the massacres the enquirer is brought face to face with certain definite and isolated phenomena. First, the massacre is always preceded by reports of its preparation, accompanied by the issue of inflammatory proclamations,

which are uniform both as regards subject-matter and style. Secondly, when the massacre occurs, the facts which are officially stated to be its cause invariably prove to be false. Thirdly, the action of those who take part in the massacre reveals a certain organisation, which deprives it of all accidental and elemental characteristics. Those who take part in the massacre act in the consciousness of some right, in the consciousness of impunity, and they only continue acting till this consciousness is shaken; when that moment arrives the massacre ceases swiftly and easily. Further, in the action of the police there is never any uniformity, and while certain police districts are devastated by the massacres under the eyes of a considerable constabulary force, others remain almost untouched owing to the protection of the police, who perform their duties conscientiously and energetically. Finally, when the massacre is over, arrests are made, and the authorities who examine the culprits cannot help having the impression that those who have been brought before them are less like criminals than ignorant people who have been deceived by some definite thing. Thus we feel that some kind of uniform and widely-planned organisation exists. Those who affirm that it is simply the doing of the Government, and think that the question is thereby settled, are mistaken, but they are not wholly mistaken; and the events of the past winter, which form the subject of our question, will help us to throw some light on these dark proceedings. In January, 1905, a great quantity of well-printed proclamations, which had been widely circulated in the chief centres of Southern and Western Russia, together

with alarming complaints regarding the preparation of massacres in Vilna, Bielostok, Kieff, &c., came into the hands of some one who occupied a subordinate position in the Ministry of the Interior, and who was well known as an enemy of massacres (I am not speaking of myself).

"The massacre at Homel in January confirmed the fears which had been expressed, and spurred the above-mentioned individual to spare no efforts to prevent further massacres, which he succeeded in doing owing to the steps taken by the Prime Minister (Count Witte), who gradually succeeded in discovering the working of the hidden organisation. It was then that the following facts concerning the action of the massacre-mongers came to light. A group of persons, forming the active militia of our own 'patriotic' societies, working together with people closely related to a certain newspaper (*The Moscow Gazette*) started an active anti-revolutionary movement. Being 'patriots' in the sense recently defined by the member for Tver and 'full Russians,' they discovered the cause of the revolution to lie in the non-Russian races, in the inhabitants of the outlying districts, and among the Jews. They called on the Russian people, and especially the Russian soldiers, to grapple with the rebels, in ten thousands of proclamations of the most repulsive character. These proclamations were transmitted by members of the society to the place of action, and handed over there to their local allies, who in their turn distributed them with careful interpretations. The consequences, judged from the point of view of those who were trying to maintain central authority intact, were curious. The assistant of the Chief of Police (I take an ordinary

example) distributes the proclamation without informing his chief. Or, for instance, the head of the first police station would be confided in, but not the head of the second. Special sums of money came into the possession of some of the subordinates of the Gendarmerie; certain obscure persons began to visit them; rumours circulated in the town of certain preparations; frightened people sought the Governor. The Governor reassured them, feeling, however, that the situation was far from reassuring. From the Ministry came telegrams about measures to be taken, and measures were often taken, but measures taken in this sense were far from inspiring universal confidence.

"It happened that members of the police supposed in all good faith that such measures were taken for show, for decency's sake; but that they knew the real object of the Government, they read between the lines, and above the orders of the Governor they heard a voice from afar in which they placed greater faith. In a word the result was incredible confusion, utter disorganisation, and the complete demoralisation of authority. In the meantime in St. Petersburg, so far back as the autumn of 1905 (and it appears up to the time when the October Ministry took office), in No. 16, Fontanka, in an out-of-the-way room of the Department of Police, a printing-press was at work, bought at the expense of the Department. An officer of the gendarmerie in mufti, Komissaroff, worked the press, and with the help of a few assistants prepared the proclamation. The secret of the existence of this printing-press was so well kept, and the doings of its manager were so cleverly concealed, that not only

in the Ministry but even in the Department of the Police, there were few people who knew of its existence. In the meantime the work of the organisation, of which the press was the instrument, was evidently successful; since Komissaroff, in answer to some one who stumbled on it by chance and asked him a question about the work, said: 'We can arrange any massacre you like; a massacre of ten or a massacre of ten thousand.' Sir, this phrase is historical (Sensation.) I can add that in Kiev a massacre of ten thousand had been arranged to take place on February 3rd, but it was successfully averted. (Great sensation.)

"The Prime Minister (Count Witte) had, it is said, a serious fit of nervous asthma when these facts were communicated to him. He sent for Komissaroff, who reported as to his actions and the authority which had been given him, and in a few hours neither printing-press nor proclamations were to be found in the Department, and that is why nobody, not even the Minister of the Interior, will be able to satisfy the wish of the Duma to learn the names of the men who created the organisation, assured its members of immunity, acted like magic on the police and other officials, and even managed to obtain promotion and reward for the most active among them. I will now proceed to my conclusions. My first is this: That the declaration of the Minister of the Interior affords us no serious guarantee with regard to the cessation of organisations which take part in the preparation of huge massacres and draw Government officials into their sphere of action. It is clear that the chief organisers and inspirers are outside the

sphere of the Government, and as far as their business is concerned it is equally indifferent to them whether the Minister of the Interior will observe a benevolent neutrality towards them or take a line of opposition. Further, I affirm that no Ministry, even if it were chosen from the Duma, could restore order in the country so long as certain unknown persons who stand outside, behind an impassable barrier, continue to lay their brutal fingers on certain parts of the machine of State, disturbing its political balance with experiments on living organisations, and performing a kind of political vivisection. My second conclusion is still more melancholy—it concerns the Duma.

"Sirs, from all parts of Russia we have come hither not only with complaints and indignation, but with a keen thirst for action, for self-sacrifice and truth, with true patriotism. There are many among us here whose income depends on their property, and have we heard from them one word against compulsory expropriation of the land in the interests of the working man? And is it not this very 'revolutionary Duma' which from the first day of its activity up to the last few days has attempted to raise the authority of the Crown, to place it above party strife and above our errors, and to preserve it from the responsibility for those errors? What sort of a Duma is necessary now that the hour of inevitable reform has struck, if not such a one in which party interests and the class-division have given way to the triumph of the union of the welfare of the people and the welfare of the State? Nevertheless, we feel that those dark forces are arming against us, and dividing us from the Crown, and are preventing the

Crown from having confidence in us. They will not allow us to accomplish that union with the Crown which, according to the law granting us a new order of things, is the indispensable condition and the only pledge of the peaceful development of the life of our country. Herein lies a great danger, and this danger will not disappear so long as in the direction of affairs and in the fortunes of our country we continue to feel the influence of men who have the education of police-men and sergeants, and are massacre-mongers on principle."

CHAPTER XXIII

NAZARENKO AND OTHER PEASANT MEMBERS

ST. PETERSBURG, *July 6th.*

AFTER a week's absence in England I returned to St. Petersburg to find the situation much as I had left it, except that the tension has perhaps imperceptibly grown greater. The main factors of the situation are unchanged.

Rumours are current that a change of Ministry is probable, but it is generally considered that the appointment of a Ministry chosen from the Ministry itself is out of the question. One fact should be borne in mind in considering the rumours with regard to the latest phase of Court opinion and Government policy, namely, that there is probably no fixed policy in those spheres; up to the present no such policy has been perceptible, and what has been done one day has been countermanded and contradicted the next. Therefore, as far as the Government and the Court are concerned, all things are possible. One might apply to them a phrase used by a French historian with regard to Louis XVI.: "Il n'eut que des velléités, des répugnances. Il céda tour à tour, sans plan, sans dessein quelconque, aux influences qui l'entouraient, à l'influence de la reine, du Comte d'Artois, de Necker . . . il vécut au jour

le jour, disant oui, disant non, selon que le conseiller du moment était plus importun et plus pressant." This is an exact definition of the policy manifested by the Russian Government and Court combined during the last two years.

As far as the Duma is concerned, there is the same deadlock which has existed ever since it met; the Duma insisting on the creation of responsible Ministers, the Ministers admitting the existence of the Duma in theory and denying it in practice. The tension of feeling in the Duma itself is greater than when I left, although the debates of the last three days have been fairly quiet. But it is a significant if not an ominous fact that the Constitutional Democrats are now attacked by men who have hitherto supported them on account of the mildness of their tactics.

A week spent in England enabled me to realise to a certain extent what is the English opinion with regard to Russian affairs. After one has been in Russia for some time certain things become so familiar that one takes for granted that they are too well known to mention. If one then visits England one realizes that there is a great gulf of ignorance between England and the elementary facts of the situation in Russia. I think the principal thing which struck me in what I heard Englishmen say about the Duma was that no sort of distinction was made among the elements of which it is composed. It is generally supposed to be a body exclusively consisting of violent Socialists. This is not the case; although, owing to the abnormal situation created by the Duma being face to face with a Ministry which does not seriously admit its existence,

it will at any moment be ready to show a unanimous front of opposition towards the Government. The second thing which struck me was that people in England judge affairs in Russia according to an English standard. They forget that the conditions are different. The Russian Government, in some of its unofficial utterances in the English Press, reminds us of this fact when it wishes to lay stress on the opinion that the Duma is not a Parliament, and must not be considered as such. Their argument cuts both ways, and it might be applied to the Russian Government, comparing it with the Governments of other countries, but I would rather apply this reasoning to the demands of the Duma. The Government says these demands are impossible, and public opinion in England is apt to re-echo this sentiment, feeling that this standpoint is a safe and sound one. I am not going into the question in detail; only I wish to point out a few facts which perhaps make these demands seem less extravagant than they appear to be at first sight.

Let us take first the abolition of capital punishment. People say: "They are asking for the abolition of capital punishment in Russia, whereas in an enlightened country like ours we hang women. It is absurd." Now, capital punishment, except for regicides, was abolished in Russia by the Empress Elizabeth in 1753; and it has only been applied lately in virtue of martial law. If you committed an ordinary murder in Russia you were put in prison for a certain number of years, often not for a very long period. Ordinary murders did not increase in consequence, and the Russians were satisfied with this detail of their legislation. Now, since the

revolutionary movement began last year, and more especially since the prevalence of martial law in many districts, what has happened is this: that whereas capital punishment was still in abeyance in respect to ordinary criminals, it obtained as far as political offenders were concerned. It is objected, of course, that people who throw bombs must expect to be killed and that the murder of innocent policemen is wholly unjustifiable. But the other side rejoins as follows: "What is terrorism but the inevitable result of the continued lawlessness of the local authorities representing the Government?" While admitting to the full that it is deplorable, how can one expect it to diminish as long as the Government continues to condone guilty officials, or only punishes them in a ludicrously inadequate manner? It is here that the Government's case breaks down. A man who kills a policeman is, if he is caught, at least certain of punishment, but if a police officer walks into a house and kills, as Ermolov did in Moscow, an utterly inoffensive doctor, he is certain to be let off (Ermolov was sentenced to deprivation of military rank and a short term of imprisonment). That is what the Liberals complain of, pointing at the same time to utterly indiscriminate executions carried out under martial law by generals in Moscow, in the Baltic provinces, and in Siberia. I cannot say that I think their position is wildly unreasonable. The Government's argument is exceedingly specious, and it is the easiest thing in the world to convince any Englishman of its soundness. only it omits half the truth and the whole cause of the agitation.

The same thing can be said about the demand for

amnesty. People in England think that the Duma is clamouring exclusively for the release of murderers. The fact is that, as I have said before, the proportion of murderers in prison is small. The bomb-throwers nearly always escape or are killed, whereas the prisons are packed with people who are there by chance and against whom there is not even any accusation.

Again, take the land question: the demands on the Duma seem far less exaggerated to a Russian Conservative than they do to an English Whig. The Russian Conservative may, and probably does, disagree with them, but he does not consider them childishly outrageous. The Duma contains some highly-respected and important landlords, who have all voted in favour of the principle of compulsory expropriation, and I think they know more about the land question in Russia even than the most sensible Englishman.

July 6th (Later).

To-day in the Duma there was a bare-footed man in rags, who said he had arrived in St. Petersburg chiefly owing to the kindness of the railway guards. His house had been burnt, owing to some squabble with the police authorities. Another correspondent and I had some talk with him. He thought we were deputies. He said: "Stand up for our rights and I will go back and tell them you are doing so."

July 6th.

The question of the Inter-Parliamentary Congress to be held in London is arousing interest here. It is not

yet decided what delegates are to go. Professor Kovolievski introduced me to one of the peasant members of the Duma—Nazarenko, the deputy for Kharhov—who wished to speak to me about it. Nazarenko is far the most remarkable of the peasant deputies. He is a tall, striking figure, with black hair, a pale face with prominent clearly-cut features, such as Velasquez would have taken to paint a militant apostle. He went through the course of primary education, and by subsequently educating himself he has attained to an unwonted degree of culture. Besides this he is a born speaker and a most original character. "I want to go to London," he said, "so that the English may see a real peasant and not a sham one, and so that I can tell the English what we, the real people, think and feel about them." I said I was glad he was going. "I shan't go unless I am chosen by the others," he answered. "I have written my name down and asked, but I shan't ask twice. I never ask twice for anything. When I say my prayers I only ask God once for a thing, and if it is not granted I never ask again. So it's not likely I would ask my fellow-men twice for anything. I am like that; I leave out that passage in the prayers about being a miserable slave. I am not a miserable slave, neither of man nor of heaven." "That is what the Church calls spiritual pride," I answered. "I don't believe in all that," he answered. "My religion is the same as that of Tolstoi." He then pointed to the ikon which is in the lobby of the Duma. "I pay no attention to that," he said, "It is a board covered with gilt, but a lot of people think that the ikon is God."

I asked him if he liked Tolstoi's books. "Yes," he

answered. "His books are great, but his philosophy is weak. It may be all right for mankind thousands of years hence, but it is no use now. I have no friends," he continued. "Books are my friends. But lately my house was burnt, and all my books with it. I have read a lot, but I never had anybody to tell me what to read, so I read without any system. I did not go to school till I was thirteen."

"Do you like Dostoievski's books?" "Yes; he knows all about the human soul. When I see a man going down hill I know exactly how it will happen and what he is going through, and I could stop him because I have read Dostoievski." "Have you read translations of any foreign books?" "Very few; some of Zola's books, but I don't like them because he does not really know the life he is describing. Some of Guy de Maupassant's stories I have read, but I do not like them either, because I don't want to know more about that sort of people than I know already." "Have you read Shakespeare?" "Yes. There is nobody like him. When you read a conversation of Shakespeare's, when one person is speaking you think he is right, and when the next person answers him you think he is right. He understands everybody. But I want to read Spencer—Herbert Spencer. I have never been able to get his works." I promised to procure him Herbert Spencer's works.

I hope he will go to London, for he is a strangely picturesque figure and an original character, this dark-eyed Velasquez-like Nazarenko, proud as Lucifer and full of ideals, a kind of mixture of Shelley and Cato.

July 7th.

This afternoon I went to have tea with two of the peasant deputies. They had asked me because it was the Name-day of one of them. They are living in a new hotel and are most comfortably lodged. They pay a rouble a day for a room. Their rooms are far more comfortable and much cleaner than mine. We had beer, vodka, cucumbers, sardines and cold sausage, and we discussed very many subjects. During the afternoon many other members dropped in, and among them a member of the "Council of Empire." These peasants, who come from an exceedingly distant government, belong to the more educated category. I believe the education in their particular government is good owing to the energy the Zemstva have displayed there. There are three of these peasants: one of them is a sensible man who does not know much about things outside Russia; but one of the others is quite well acquainted with the main features of European politics and talks of Jaurés, Chamberlain, and Lord Rosebery. "Who would have thought two years ago," said one of them, "that we should see an Englishman here in the flesh?"

July 8th.

This evening I went to see an electro-technician, whom I know. We went for a walk on the islands. The technician's brother, who had been a sailor, was with us. The electro-technician had been in Belgium and London. Then we went to the "Norodniu Dom," the "People's Palace," a place where there is a popular theatre, a garden, and a restaurant. Before we went

in here, the technician's brother said he must have some vodka. So we went into a wine shop and he drank a large tumbler of vodka straight off. "This is the eighth glass I have had to-day," he said. "It is only habit. I don't feel any effects from it; but if I were to drink a glass of wine now I should be drunk." We went into the "People's Palace" and sat in the garden. Some other friends joined us. We ordered beer, and the technician's brother was unwise enough to drink some. The technician described life in Paris and London. Paris he detested. He spoke French rather well. He said it was a boring city. I said, "Don't you like the French theatres? You must admit they act well." He said: "Their plays are so totally different from ours that I cannot bear them. They are always artificial and never the least like life. Our plays are like life." Talking of London, he said when he arrived there he realised that the Continent was one thing and England a totally different thing. He said he could not understand thousands of poor people paying a shilling to see a football match. He had lived in an English family. He admired the neatness and the cleanliness of everything. He thought the hospitality of the English was great. He said the point of view of moral superiority was extraordinary. The way an English-woman he had known had spoken of Indians and Chinese as something so infinitely inferior, too, had surprised and amused him. The sailor brother put in a few remarks and was contradicted. The glass of beer which had followed the eighth tumbler of vodka now took its effect, and he said that a man present had morally spat three times in his face, and that he was

not going to stand it any longer. His brother said that if he was not quiet he would go. He refused to be quieted, and so the company broke up.

July 9th.

To-day I went to the Duma with a translation of Herbert Spencer for Nazarenko. I also took him a translation of Shelley's poems and a translation of "Œdipus Rex." "There," I said, "are the poems of a man called Shelley." "You mean," he answered, "the man who was drowned." He took up the "Œdipus Rex," and read three verses out of it. "Modern poetry depends for its beauty on its outward form," he said. "It is all words; but if you read two lines of ancient poetry like this you see that it contains a whole philosophy."

July 11th.

I went to see Nazarenko in his house. He was not at home, but a friend of his was there. He told me to wait. He was a peasant thirty-nine years old, rather bald, with a nice intelligent face. At first he took no notice of me, and read aloud to himself out of a book. Then he suddenly turned to me and asked me who I was. I said I was an English correspondent. He got up, shut the door, and begged me to stay. "Do the English know the condition of the Russian peasantry?" he asked. "They think we are wolves and bears. Do I look like a wolf? Please say I am not a wolf." Then he ordered some tea and got a bottle of beer. He asked me to tell him how labourers

lived in England, what their houses were made of, what the floors and walls were made of, how much wages a labourer received, what was the price of meat, whether they ate meat? Then he suddenly, to my intense astonishment, put the following question to me: "In England do they think that Jesus Christ was a God or only a great man?" I asked him what he thought. He said he thought He was a great man. He said that the Russian people were very religious and superstitious; they were deceived by the priests, who threatened them with damnation. He asked me if I could lend him an English bible. He wanted to see if it was the same as a Russian bible. I said it was exactly the same. He was immensely astonished. "Do you mean to say," he asked, "that there are all those stories about Jonah and the whale and Joshua and the moon?" I said "Yes." "I thought," he said, "those had been put in for us." I tried to explain to him that we were taught almost exactly the same doctrines, the differences between the Anglican and the Orthodox Church on points of dogma being infinitesimal. We then talked of ghosts. He asked me if I believed in ghosts. I said I did; he asked why. I gave various reasons. He said he could believe in a kind of telepathy, a kind of moral wireless telegraphy; but ghosts were the invention of old women. He suddenly asked me whether the earth was four thousand years old. "Of course it's older," he said. "But that's what we are taught. We are taught nothing about geography and geology. It is, of course, a fact that there is no such thing as God," he said; "because, if there is a God He must be a just God; and as there is so

much injustice in the world it is plain that a just God does not exist." I said I could conceive there being an unjust God. Such an idea was inconceivable, he said. "But you," he went on, "an Englishman who has never been deceived by officials, do you believe that God exists?" (He thought that all ideas of religion and God as taught to the Russian people were part of a great official lie.) "I do," I said. "Why?" he asked. I asked him if he had read the book of Job. He said he had. I said that when Job has everything taken away from him, although he has done no wrong, suddenly in the very depth of his misery he recognises the existence of God in the immensity of nature, and feels that his own soul is a part of a plan too vast for him to conceive or to comprehend; in feeling that he is a part of the scheme he acknowledges the existence of God, and that is enough; he is able to consent, and to console himself, although in dust and ashes. That was, I said, what I thought one could feel. He admitted the point of view, but he did not share it. After we had had tea we went for a walk in some gardens not far off, where there were various theatrical performances going on. The audience amused me, it applauded so rapturously and insisted on an encore, whatever was played, and however it was played, with such thunderous insistence. "Priests," said my friend, "base everything on the devil. There is no devil. There was no fall of man. There are no ghosts, no spirits, but there are millions and millions of other inhabited worlds."

I left him late, when the performance was over. This man, who was a member of the Duma for the govern-

ment of Jula, was called Petruckin. I looked up his name in the list of members and found he had been educated in the local church school of the village of Kologrivo; that he had spent the whole of his life in this village and had been engaged in agriculture. That among the peasants he enjoyed great popularity as being a clever and hard-working man. He belonged to no party. He was not in the least like the men of peasant origin who had assimilated European culture. He was naturally sensible and alert of mind.

July 12th.

The Bill which the Duma passed last week abolishing capital punishment was discussed in the Upper House the day before yesterday and referred to a Committee. As the treatment of this matter has excited no little bewilderment abroad, it will, perhaps, not be useless to go further into the history of capital punishment in Russia, which I have mentioned in a previous letter. Capital punishment was abolished in Russia by the Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great, in 1753. But as long as the knout was in use it was rather the name of the thing than the thing itself which was abolished, because a hundred lashes of the knout meant death. During the last years in which the knout was employed the number of lashes was limited to thirty-five. Its use was abolished by the Emperor Nicholas in the first year of his reign (1825). Beating with a birch was abolished by the Emperor Alexander II. in 1863, except for peasants; the beating of peasants was abolished in 1904. "Depuis lors,"

writes M. Leroy-Beaulieu in his standard book on Russia, "la législation Russe est probablement la plus douce de l'Europe. . . . La peine capitale a depuis lors été réellement supprimée; à l'inverse de ce qui se voit en beaucoup d'autres pays, elle n'existe plus que pour les crimes politiques, pour les attentats contre la vie du Souverain ou la sûreté de l'État." During almost the whole reign of Alexander II., from 1855 to 1876, only one man was executed on the scaffold, namely Karakosof, the perpetrator of the first attempt made on the Emperor's life. From 1866 to 1903 only 114 men suffered the penalty of death throughout the whole of the Russian Empire.

Commenting on these statistics in the Council of Empire, M. Tagantzef pointed out that, in contradistinction to this, during 1906 up to the month of June, that is, during five months, 108 people have been condemned to death under martial law, and ninety have been executed, not counting people who have been killed without a trial. The cause, therefore, of the present agitation is the fact that capital punishment exists in Russia for political crimes only by virtue of martial law. M. Leroy-Beaulieu, in commenting on the first instances of this turn of affairs, which occurred in 1878, when a political agitator was executed in Odessa, remarks that a modern State which abolishes capital punishment should abolish it altogether, "pour ne point se donner le démenti d'une contradiction rendue parfois d'autant plus choquante pour la conscience publique qu'il lui répugne de voir, comme en Russie, le régicide ou le simple conspirateur politique traité plus sévèrement que le parricide."

For and against the entire abolition of capital punishment the chief arguments of each side are at present these: Those who wish capital punishment to be retained point to the number of political murders which have occurred during the last year, and especially to the long list of innocent policemen who have been murdered, and maintain that if capital punishment is abolished these crimes will increase. Those who wish it to be abolished say that the existence of capital punishment, so far from exercising a restraining influence on political criminals, excites people to murder and makes martyrs of them. Moreover, they point out that when people expatiate on the terrible list of political assassinations they altogether overlook their cause. They are not in all cases the result of irresponsible hysteria. The defenders of the Government say: "You make martyrs of people who are merely common murderers;" the opponents answer: "The Government shuts its eyes to the lawless and criminal acts of its officials, and the people are obliged to take the law into their own hands." This is the present state of the question, and I have endeavoured to present both sides of it. Quite apart from the political murders of the last two years, it is interesting to note that, as far as we can tell, the abolition of capital punishment in Russia has not had the effect of increasing crime. In 1890 the proportion of homicides was seven to the million in Russia (7·4), almost exactly the same as the proportion in the British Isles during that year, which was (7·5).

July 12th (continued).

This morning I went to see Nazarenko, who had

made an appointment with me. My friend Petruckin was there also. We discussed the question of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. He said he meant to go to London. "They are so absorbed here in party politics," he said, "that they forget that these things are larger and more important, because they concern Russia as a great power. The members of the Duma do not want to go with the members of the Council of Empire. But I tell them it is like this. If I see a wounded man on the ground and go to help him, and a man whom I dislike comes to help him also, I don't stop helping the wounded man because the man I dislike is helping; that would be absurd."

He said he had read some of the Shelley I had given him. Shelley was a real poet. Russian poets wrote about nothing except love; but in Shelley there was a different spirit. "I have read Byron, too, a long time ago; but he is too pessimistic, and is always harping on one theme—himself." I asked him if he had ever read "Paradise Lost." "Yes," he answered, "I read it when I was thirteen; it was one of the first books I ever read. There is glorious fantasy!"

To-day was a holiday and, talking of this, Nazarenko said that the quantity of holidays in Russia proved that the Russians were an inferior race. "My holidays are those days when there is no work for me to do, just as my fast days are those on which I am not hungry." Nazarenko, in the course of conversation, said something about religion, and Petruckin broke in, and said: "Take care! Mavriki Edouardovitch (that was I) is a full believer."

July 13th.

To-day there are rumours of a new Ministry to be formed from the majority of the Duma.

July 16th.

I went to see Petruckin this evening. We had a long conversation about the land question. He explained to me that the Labour Party's views as to the land question were silly. He said that he inclined towards the views of the Cadets.

July 18th.

Things are going badly in the Duma, and there is likely to be a split among the Cadets on the subject of a proposed Manifesto to the people, a counterblast to the Ministerial Declaration.

July 19th.

During the last week not only were rumours circulating to the effect that the resignation of the Ministry had been accepted, but certain members of the Right positively affirmed that a new Cabinet taken from the Duma had been formed. It is said now that this task was offered to M. Shipov, who is the most important representative of the Moderate parties outside the Duma, and that he refused it. Now, since yesterday fresh rumours, which have had a bad effect on the Bourse, are afloat to the effect that all idea of forming a Ministry from the Duma itself has been abandoned, and that the Government is contemplating the dissolution of the Duma and the appointment of a military dictatorship. Whether there is serious foundation for

these rumours I do not know, but it is obvious that there are only four courses open to the Government:

1. To form a Coalition Ministry under some Liberal leader outside the Duma.
2. To form a Ministry from the majority of the Duma.
3. To dissolve the Duma.
4. To do nothing.

The Government is said to have tried the first course and to have failed. The second course it appears to regard as being out of the question. The third course is said to be under consideration now. The fourth course answers to the Government's policy up to the present.

I have talked with several Conservatives lately—not Moderate Liberals, but Conservatives of the old *régime*—and their indignation against the Government was extreme. One of them said that the formation of a Ministry from the majority of the Duma, namely, the Cadets, with whom he had no sympathy, was the only chance of saving the situation; that he could understand the policy of dissolution; but the Government did neither the one nor the other, and the people who were paying for this mistake were the landlords with the destruction and devastation of their property. Another said to me that there were at present two great dangerous elements in Russia—the revolutionaries and the Government—and that of the two the Government was the more dangerous. A third, a large landed proprietor, said that he preferred to be despoiled by expropriation rather than to have all his estates devastated and his houses burnt. A Government taken from the majority of the

Duma, he added, was the only solution, but it should have been done two months ago; now it was too late. I mentioned the dissolution of the Duma and the possibility of a dictatorship. "You would want five hundred dictators, not one," he answered, "and what is the use of a dictatorship when the whole country is on fire? The action of the Government has been like this: it is as if some people had set a town on fire, locked up the fire engines, and then talked of putting a dictator at the head of the fire brigade."

In opposition to this I have heard views expressed which perhaps reflect those of the Government. One man said to me that it was now obvious that the Duma, instead of having a pacifying influence, was merely a cause of disorder; that when it was originally convened he had believed in its pacifying capacities; but now he was convinced of the contrary, and the sooner it was dissolved the better. It may be objected that, though it is after all true that the convening of the Duma did not pacify the country, it is necessary to reflect under what conditions it was convened: its hands were tied; the fundamental laws were altered for this purpose; the Government not only went on governing as before, but actually took active measures to discredit its new Parliament at home and abroad. When a Duma was asked for, the thing meant was Responsible Government. It is over this question of responsibility that the whole struggle is being carried on.

I have also heard the following argument, which is advanced by the newspaper *Rossia*, a semi-official organ, this morning: "What do we lose by deciding on

repressive measures? Even if we fail by giving in now we should be failing; therefore we are exchanging certain failure for problematic failure; it is better to give in after a fight than to surrender without a struggle, and our chances, now that we are certain of at least one part of the Army, are better than they will be a year hence, when we shall be certain of nothing. We are told that we cannot dissolve the Duma without provoking a revolution, but, from our point of view, to give in to the Duma now is equivalent to sanctioning a revolution. Let us try and prove that we can dissolve the Duma, and that they are merely trying to bluff with their threats of revolution." The logical result of this policy should be civil war. [1]

All the revolutionary elements in the country would be strengthened by a dissolution, and one can safely predict that the general disorder would be increased. For even now the sporadic anarchy is increasing daily. Will the dissolution of the Duma relieve this tension? I think not. The question then suggests itself: Is there no hope of a peaceful issue?

A Ministry formed from the majority of the Duma is the only hope; but whether it would manage to calm matters is another question. It is true that there is a moderate element, especially among the peasants, who wish to meet the landlords half way, who consider the demands of the Extreme Left, and especially their agrarian programme, to be absurd. These men would support a Ministry taken from the Duma, but they continually assert that the Government will not meet them

[1] And it has proved to be civil war; but civil war waged in everyday life and unaccompanied by an armed rising.

half way, and that, on the other hand, they consider the schemes which the Government have put forward to be fundamentally insufficient. Whether a Ministry composed of members taken from the majority of the Duma would succeed in calming the country depends on the nature and intensity of the opposition they would have to encounter, which it is impossible to gauge at present. One thing is certain, that in the event of such a Ministry being given a free hand sympathy would cease to be extended to the throwers of bombs, whose task is now greatly facilitated by the simple fact that popular opinion is with them.

When people, on the other hand, say that the Cadets have no men with whom to form a Ministry—and, to be fair, I have only heard this argument advanced either in England or by some Russian officials here—I have heard it contradicted by intelligent Russian officials—they are talking egregious nonsense. People like Professor Miliukov, MM. Nabokor, Kokoskin, Muromtzeff, and Petradjinski have shown themselves not only to be men with brains but to possess political capacity and tactical ability of no mean order. Even if they were twenty times less capable than they are they would be more capable of governing the country than the present Ministry. But unfortunately it does not seem probable that they will ever win the confidence of the Crown, since most of them in the past have suffered for their political principles, and some of them have been in prison. Therefore, whereas if they had been born in France or England they would by now be occupying exalted positions, they are now looked upon from above as men of the same category as Anarchists and throwers

of vitriol. If Mr. Balfour had been born in Russia he would certainly have been requested to confine his energies to golf and metaphysics, but if Mr. Haldane had been born here he would have probably been sent to think about the path to reality in the paths of Transbaikalia. Therefore at the root of the whole matter there is a great misunderstanding between the Crown and the Duma. It is based on the supposition that the Duma is not representative, and that the revolution is an artificial thing.

July 20th.

To-day there are ominous rūmours of dissolution in the air. Nazarenko is not going to London. He said he thought Professor Kovolievski was not going, so he had withdrawn his candidature. Now it turned out that Professor Kovolievski was going he was sorry. He said he respected Maxime Maximovitch Kovolievski to such an extent that if he were to tell him to hang himself on a tree he would do so.

July 21st.

Every one is talking of the rumours of dissolution.

July 22nd.

I went to see some of the peasant members in their hotel. They expect that the Duma will be dissolved.

July 23rd.

In this morning's *Retch* there was a short paragraph stating that late in the night a rumour had

reached them concerning the dissolution of the Duma; but it was not true. It was, however, or rather it is. The dissolution is a fact. I have just seen the official announcement in a special edition.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE DUMA

ST. PETERSBURG, *July 25th.*

THE dissolution of the Duma, although it had been predicted during the course of last week, and although the arrival of a large number of troops in St. Petersburg was known, came as a surprise. During the whole of yesterday the town was abnormally quiet. I went to the various clubs: the Labour Party Club, the Cadet Club, the Socialist Club. They were all deserted. Some of the members had left for Finland; others were holding meetings in various parts of the town. In the club of the Labour Party, which is in the Nevsky Prospect, nothing was left except the cold remains of a supper, a large portrait of the Emperor, a picture of the Dowager Empress, and a pastel of Spiridonovna. At the Cadet Club I saw the peasant Nazarenko; he was just starting for Finland. "Things are bad," I said. "The life of a State is like the life of a man," he replied, philosophically. "If there were no bad there would be no good, either." Other visitors arrived and gathered together in knots, speaking with bated breath, as if they were under the cloud of some huge calamity. "Does it mean the end of the Mon-

archy?" I asked one man. "It means the end of the dynasty, in any case," he answered.

In the evening I saw some Octobrists and Conservatives, and asked them their opinion. "The Government may be right in having dissolved the Duma," one of them said, "but what is criminal on their part is the way in which they treated the Duma from the first, trying to discredit it in every possible way, and doing everything they could to provoke it to rebellion. Russia is an odd country, and everything is possible; it is possible that the country may quiet down if liberal reforms are at once put into practice; but I confess I have little faith in this, and if the country does not quiet down this Ministry will be directly responsible for any disasters which may happen."

Some one else, more Liberal, said to me: "If I lose everything I possess, if my land is devastated and my house is burnt, I shall never blame the Cadets; I shall never cease to believe they might have managed things if they had been empowered to do so early enough—that is to say, last October."

A third person, a landlord, said to me yesterday that the step was inevitable, because no Ministry, even were it composed of geniuses, and no Duma, even were it composed of angels, would be of the slightest avail until it was settled whether or no there is to be a new *régime* in Russia. You cannot, he argued, have the new wine in the old skins. It was no use having a Duma supposed to be working together with a power directly opposed to it and working in a diametrically opposite direction. As matters were, a law, if it passed through the Duma and the Council

of Empire, had to be sanctioned by the *x* quantity who had the power in his hands at Court. And if it is said that it is not constitutional to inquire into the advisers of the Crown, it must be remembered that whenever in other countries advisers have been all-powerful, and have acted against the will of the people, the advisers have been forced to go, failing which the Monarch has been deposed. Now the question will be settled. Either the Government will prove it can govern the country and quiet it down—that is to say, it will prove itself to be strong—or it will prove its weakness and ultimately come to grief.

All these are opinions I have heard expressed by Russians during the last two days. I have also heard it said that the dissolution of the Duma is an excellent step, that the Duma did no good and some harm. I have also heard all the disaster attributed to the Cadets, some people saying they were too constitutional, and that it is impossible to be constitutional during a revolution, others that they did not succeed in dominating the Left parties, but allowed themselves to be overridden by them.

In the meantime the new Prime Minister has announced his intention of carrying out a great Liberal programme of far-reaching reforms on a large scale, and of maintaining the strictest order throughout the country, so that the reforms may be realised. This sounds charming. "At first, of course, you think it's charming, but very soon it gets alarming." The first step taken in the new direction has been to suppress all the Moderate Liberal newspapers and to introduce a system of censorship more severe than that

which prevailed during the worst times of Plehve, and to arrest a man who took off his hat to the members of the Duma at the railway station. To-day, however, the Cadet newspaper, the *Retch*, has once more made its appearance. The Government are looking forward to the new elections, which they hope will return a Conservative majority truly representative of the people.

Among other constitutional matters there is one lesson which they have not learnt, and probably never will learn, and that is that if you have a Parliamentary system you must put up with the fact that it will often return a majority which is distasteful to you. If the elections are carried out fairly it can safely be predicted that the majority returned will be ultra-Radical. But I suppose this time those steps will be taken which the present Ministry so bitterly accuse Count Witte of having omitted to take, the steps to "arrange" the elections, which, we are told (several officials told me personally), the Government always take in England. That is to say, Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, it is thought, take the necessary steps to prevent the election of Mr. Keir Hardie and his supporters. It is strange that so far this plan should have proved unsuccessful. It would be, perhaps, simpler here to pass an electoral law in virtue of which only policemen could be elected members of Parliament. This would prove a constitutional measure which the present Ministry would thoroughly understand.

One sometimes hears it said that the Duma was in too great a hurry, and that it should have waited patiently and obtained everything by constitutional

means. This was the course the majority were doing their best to pursue. They had to reckon with a Government which was opposing them by unconstitutional means. It is certainly not constitutional for a Government to distribute among the troops proclamations (I have seen them) inciting the Army against the Parliament, and attacking members of Parliament with every kind of gross insult and calumny. Nor is it constitutional for a Minister to request the correspondent of a large foreign newspaper to state that the Parliament is not a thing to be reckoned with, but merely a revolutionary body. The answer people made to these objections is that there is not, and there never has been, a constitution in Russia, and they are perfectly right.

But, apart from this, I agree with the Russian landlord I have quoted above, who said that the main question must be decided before one can talk of a Parliament here. The abscess must be pierced to the core, he said. It was a pleasing illusion to think the Cadets would obtain a change of *régime* by constitutional means. "You must wait, little pigeon, you must wait," says a character in a novel by a famous Russian satirist. "I have done nothing else during my whole life," is the reply. And if the Parliament had waited until the Government became constitutional it could have waited until Doomsday, because, as another Russian said to me not long ago, "it has less idea of what *constitutional* means than the Turks, only the Turks are more competent and are better governed."

Of course, if the new Prime Minister succeeds in quieting the country and carrying out Liberal reforms

on a large scale every one will admit that the Government was right from the first, and that the Duma was wrong. "But what use are reforms," said some one to-day, "when the Government has decided not to give the initial reform which should be the cause of all the others: namely, a change of *régime*, a constitution and a system of responsible government?" Besides, in order to quiet the country the Government must first succeed in recovering the confidence of the people. At present it has not got the confidence of any party, any group, or any section of the population.

St. Petersburg is full of troops. A cabman said to me yesterday that these were not Russian troops, but *Austrians* in disguise. This is a curious reflection of the remarks on foreign intervention which were published on the first page of the semi-official newspaper here last week, without, of course, the knowledge of the Ministers. I asked the same man what he expected would happen. "There will be a big *skandal*," he answered. "It is impossible that it should be otherwise. They say: 'Let us have a Duma,' and then they say, 'Let us send it away'; there can only be disorders after that. We, the cabmen, have never yet struck, but we shall this time when the moment comes." (I think he thought that would make all the difference.) "What about the soldiers?" I asked. "The soldiers oughtn't to rebel," he answered, "but they ought to refuse to fire on the people. They would not be breaking their oath. Their oath obliges them to fight the enemy, but not their brothers. That is wrong." Another cabman said a curious thing to me, as we were driving along the Quays. "We of ourselves can do nothing," he said;

"but those are the people who will do it for us," and he pointed to a student who was passing by.

The hall-porter at the house where I lived told me he had known it all along. "It is bad," he said; "very bad." I think that is really all there is to be said about the matter. It is bad; very bad—that is to say, if one looks back and then forward.

Later.

News has come of the appeal the ex-members of the Duma have made to the country, urging citizens not to pay taxes and to refuse to serve in the Army. Everybody is agreed that their action is a fatal mistake, since they have no means of having any such measures carried out.

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE COUNTRY AFTER THE DISSOLUTION

NEAR MOSCOW, *August 1st.*

I HAVE been staying for the last three days in the country quite close to Moscow. I thought I should get away for a time from politics, from talk of new Cabinets, new eras, liberal autocracy, strong-handed reform, and other such pleasing illusions. I was mistaken. Politics filter through everywhere now; in a third-class railway carriage, at the station buffets, in the public parks, in the villages.

As regards the various opinions I heard expressed the prevailing one is this: that the new Prime Minister's programme of strong-handed Liberal reform is a repetition of the programme of the last five Ministers of the Interior.

M. Stolypin says these last five Premiers were all mistaken in their policy; in the meantime (people say) it is difficult to see in what respects his programme is to differ from theirs. And we have no evidence as yet that M. Stolypin is an infinitely more capable man than Count Witte. Some people, referring to the official denial of the article that appeared in the semi-official newspaper *Rossia*, with regard to foreign intervention,

say: "If M. Stolypin cannot control the first page of his official newspaper, how can he expect to control Russia?" Others commenting on his intention to initiate social reform and put a stop to the political movement, say that this effort is the very root and kernel of the whole trouble in Russia; that the mistake of would-be reformers has always consisted in their not understanding that social reforms are impossible unless they are preceded by political reforms. (M. Leroy-Beaulieu, in his splendid book on Russia, writes in a most illuminating fashion on this very point.)

As regards what is actually happening in Moscow, the town is empty and quiet; public meetings are forbidden, small political gatherings in private houses are held only under surveillance of the police; gatherings of the "Black Gang" are said to be allowed; the Press is certainly subjected to a rigid censorship; the *Morning Post* arrived blacked out yesterday for the first time for two years; the manifesto of the ex-members is being spread, likewise the manifesto of the Social Democrats. I have not seen anybody who thinks that an era of peace and resigned content has begun.

Near the house where I am living there is a village; as this village is so close to the town of Moscow I thought that its inhabitants would be suburban, and therefore not representative of peasant life. This is not so. The nearness to Moscow seems to make no difference at all. I was walking through the village on Saturday morning when a peasant who was sitting on his doorstep called me and asked me if I would like to eat an apple. I accepted his invitation. He said he presumed I was living with X., as other Englishmen had lived

there before. Then he asked abruptly, "Is Marie Alexandrovna in your place?" I said my hostess's name was Marie Karlovna. "Of course," he said, "I don't mean here, but in your place, in your country." I didn't understand. Then he said it again very loud, and asked if I was deaf. I said I wasn't deaf and that I understood what he said, but I did not know to whom he was alluding. "Talking to you," he said, "is like talking to a Tartar. You look at one and don't understand what one says." Then it suddenly flashed on me that he was alluding to the Queen of England. "You mean Queen Alexandra," I said, "the sister of the Empress Marie Feodorovna." "That's what I mean," he said. It afterwards appeared that he considered that England had been semi-Russianised owing to this relationship; he thought of course that both the Queen and the Empress were Russians.

Two more peasants joined us, and one of them brought a small bottle (the size of a sample) of vodka and a plate of cherries. "We will go and drink this in the orchard," they said. So we went to the orchard. "You have come here to learn," said the first peasant, a bearded man, whose name was Feodor. "Many Englishmen have been here to learn. I taught one all the words that we use." I said I was a correspondent; that I had just arrived from St. Petersburg, where I had attended the sittings of the Duma. "What about the Duma?" asked the other peasant. "They've sent it away. Will there be another one?" I said a manifesto spoke of a new one. "Yes," said Feodor, "there is a manifesto abolishing punishments." I said I hadn't observed that clause. "Will they give us back

our land?" asked Feodor. "All the land here belongs to us really." Then followed a long explanation as to why the land belonged to them. It is the property, as a matter of fact, of the Crown. I said I did not know. "If they don't give it back to us we shall take it," he said simply. Then one of the other peasants added, "Those manifestoes are not written by the Emperor but by the 'authorities.'" (The same thing was said to me by a cabman at St. Petersburg, his reason being that the Emperor would say "I," whereas the manifesto said "We.") Then they asked me why they had not won the war; and whether it was true that the war had been badly managed. "We know nothing," he said. "What newspaper tells the truth? Where can we find the real truth? Is it to be found in the *Russkoe Slovo*?" (a big Moscow newspaper). They asked me about the Baltic Fleet and why Admiral Nebogatoff had hoisted a signal which meant "Beat us."

Then I went away, and as I was going Feodor asked me if I would like to go and see the haymaking the next day. If so I had better be at his house at three o'clock in the afternoon. The next day, Sunday, I kept my appointment, but found nobody at home in the house of Feodor except a small child. "Is Feodor at home?" I asked. Then a man appeared from a neighbouring cottage and said: "Feodor is in the inn—drunk." "Is he going to the haymaking?" I asked. "Of course he's going." "Is he very drunk?" I asked. "No, not very; I will tell him you are here." And the man went to fetch him. Then a third person arrived, a young peasant in his Sunday clothes, and asked me where I was going. I said I was going to make hay.

"Do you know how to?" he asked. I said I didn't. "I see," he said, "you are just going to amuse yourself. I advise you not to go. They will be drunk, and there might be unpleasantness."

Then Feodor arrived, apparently perfectly sober except that he was rather red in the face. He harnessed his horse to a cart. "Would I mind not wearing my hat but one of his?" he asked. I said I didn't mind, and he lent me a dark blue yachting cap, which is what the peasants wear all over Russia. My shirt was all right. I had got on a loose Russian shirt without a collar. He explained that it would look odd to be seen with some one wearing such a hat as I had. It was a felt hat. The little boy who was running about the house was Feodor's son. He was barefooted, and one of his feet was bound up. I asked what was the matter with it. The bandage was at once taken off and I was shown the remains of a large blister and gathering. "It's been cured now," Feodor said. "It was a huge blister. It was cured by witchcraft. I took him to the Wise Woman and she put something on it and said a few words and the pain stopped, and it got quite well. Doctors are no good; they only cut one about. I was kicked by a horse and the pain was terrible. I drank a lot of vodka and it did no good; then I went to the Wise Woman and she put ointment on the place and she spoke away the pain. We think it's best to be cured like this—village fashion." I knew this practice existed, but it was curious to find it so near Moscow. It was like finding witchcraft at Surbiton.

Then we started for the hay meadows, which were about ten miles distant. On the road we met other

peasants in carts bound for the same destination. They all gravely took off their hats to each other. After an hour and a half's drive we arrived at the Moscow River, on the bank of which there is a tea-shop. Tea-shops exist all over Russia. The feature of them is that you cannot buy spirits there. We stopped and had tea. Everybody was brought a small teapot for tea and a huge teapot of boiling water, and very small cups, and everybody drank about four or five cups out of the saucer. They eat the sugar separately, and do not put it into the cup.

Then we crossed the river on a floating bridge, and driving past a large white Byzantine monastery arrived at the green hay meadows on the farther river bank towards sunset. Then the haymaking began. The first step which was taken was for vodka bottles to be produced and for everybody to drink vodka out of a cup. Then there was a great deal of shouting and an immense amount of abuse. "It doesn't mean anything," Feodor said. "We curse each other and make it up afterwards." Then they drew lots for the particular strip they should mow; each man carrying his scythe high over his shoulder. ("Don't come too near," said Feodor; "when men have taken drink they are careless with scythes.")

When the lots were drawn they began mowing. It was a beautiful sight to see the mowing in the sunset by the river; the meadows were of an intense soft green; the sky all fleecy and golden to the west, and black with a great thundercloud over the woods to the east, lit up with intermittent summer lightnings. The mowers were all in different coloured shirts—scarlet,

blue, white, and green. They mowed till the twilight fell and the thundercloud got near to us. Then Feodor came and made our cart into a tent by tying up the shafts, putting a piece of matting across them, and covering it with hay, and under this he made beds of hay. We had supper. Feodor said his prayers, and prepared to go to sleep, but changed his mind, got up, and joined some friends in a neighbouring cart.

Three children and a deaf and dumb peasant remained with me. The peasants who were in the neighbouring tent were drunk; they began by quarrelling, then they sang for about four hours without stopping; then they talked. Feodor came back about half an hour before it was light, and slept for that brief space. I did not sleep at all. I wasn't tired, and the singing was delightful to hear: so excessively characteristic of Russia and so utterly unlike the music of any other country, except that of Mongolia. What strikes me most about it is in the first place the accuracy with which the parts are taken, and in the second place the curious rhythm, and the close, ending generally on the dominant. The children chattered for some time about mushroom gathering, and the deaf and dumb man told me a lot by signs, and then they went to sleep.

As soon as it was light the mowers all got up and began mowing. I do not know which was the more beautiful effect, that of the dusk or of the dawn. The dawn was gray with pearly clouds and suffused with the faintest pink tinge, and in the east the sun rose like a great red ball with no clouds near it. At ten o'clock we drove to an inn and had tea; then we drove back, and the hay, although it was quite wet, for it had rained

in the night, was carried there and then. "The women dry it at home," Feodor explained; "it's too far for us to come here twice." The carts were laden with hay, and I drove one of them home, lying on the top of the hay, in my sleep. I had always envied the drivers of carts whom one meets lying on a high load of hay, fast asleep, and now I know from experience that there is no such delicious slumber, with the kind sun warming one through and through after a cold night, and the slow jolting of the wagon rocking one, and the smell of the hay acting like a soporific. Every now and then one wakes up to see the world through a golden haze, and then one falls back and drowns with pleasure in a deep slumber of an inexpressibly delicious quality.

When we re-crossed the river we again stopped for tea. As we were standing outside an old woman passed us, and just as she passed one of the peasants said to me, "Sit down, Barine." Barine, I suppose everybody knows, means a *monsieur*, in contradistinction to the lower class. "Very like a Barine," said the woman, with a sarcastic snort, upon which the peasant told her in the plainest and most uncomplimentary speech I have ever heard exactly what he thought of her personal appearance, her antecedents, and what she was fit for. She passed on with dignity and in silence. Then, after a time, I climbed up on the wagon again, and sank back into my green paradise of dreams, and remember nothing more till we arrived home at five o'clock in the evening.

ST. PETERSBURG, *August 6th.*

At a moment like this, when one meets with various

conflicting statements made by people in authority, Government officials or Liberal leaders, as to what the Russian people, the real people, are thinking and feeling, it seemed to me that it would be worth while to put aside theoretical speculations for a moment, and to try to obtain some small fragments of first-hand evidence with regard to what the people are saying and thinking. With this object in view I have spent the last four nights in the train between Moscow and St. Petersburg. My field of observation was necessarily small, but it cannot be called unrepresentative or anti-national.

The first thing which struck me was a small incident which occurred at a railway station at Moscow, and has a certain significance. I was engaging a cab, and near me an officer was doing the same thing. The cabmen were expressing reluctance to accept the officer's terms, and my cabman turned round to me and said: "That man comes every day; he is drunk, and he drives and drives, sometimes to the other end of the town, and never pays a single kopeck." "Why do you drive him if he never pays you?" I asked. "There is nothing to be done—he is an officer," answered the cabman. This is a small example of how the lawlessness of the existing system of government in Russia affects the poorer classes.

I travelled from Moscow to St. Petersburg by a slow train in a third-class carriage. In the carriage was a mixed and representative assembly of people—a priest, a merchant from Kursk, a photographer from Tchelabinsk, a young volunteer: that is to say a young man doing his year's military service previous to becoming

an officer, two minor public servants, an ex-soldier who had been through the Turkish campaign, a soldier who had lately returned from Manchuria, three peasants, two Tartars, a small tradesman, a carpenter, and some others. Besides these a whole band of gipsies (with their children) encamped themselves on the platform outside the carriage, and penetrated every now and then into the carriage until they were driven out by threats and curses.

The first thing everybody did was to make themselves thoroughly comfortable: to arrange mattresses and pillows for the night; then they began to make each other's acquaintance. We had not travelled far before the gipsies began to sing on the platform, and this created some interest. They suggested fortune-telling, but the ex-soldier shouted at them in a gruff voice to begone. One of the officials had his fortune told. The gipsy said she could do it much better for five roubles (ten shillings) than for a few kopecks, which he had given. I had my fortune told, which consisted in a hurried rigmarole to the effect that I was often blamed, but never blamed others; that I could only work if I was my own master, and that I would shortly experience a great change of fortune. The gipsy added that if I could give her five roubles she would tie a piece of bark in my handkerchief which, with the addition of a little bread and salt, would render me immune from danger. The gipsies soon got out. The journey went on uneventfully—

> Le moine disait son bréviaire,
> La femme chantait,

as in La Fontaine's fable. We had supper and tea, and the ex-soldier related the experiences of his life, saying he had travelled much and seen the world (he was a Cossack by birth), and was not merely a *Moujik*. This offended one of the peasants, a bearded man, who walked up from his place and grunted in protest, and then walked back again.

They began to talk politics. The Cossack was asked his opinion on the attitude of the Cossacks. He said their attitude had changed, and that they objected to police service. The photographer from Tchelabinsk corroborated this statement, saying he had been present at a Cossack meeting in Siberia. Then we had a short concert. The photographer produced a mandoline and played tunes. All the inmates of the carriage gathered round him. One of the peasants said: "Although I am an ignorant man" (it was the peasant who had grunted) "I could see at once that he wasn't simply playing with his fingers, but with something else" (the tortoiseshell that twangs the mandoline). He asked the photographer how much a mandoline cost. On being told thirty roubles he said he would give thirty roubles to be able to play as well as that. Somebody, by way of appreciation, put a cigarette into the mouth of the photographer as he was playing.

Then I went to bed in the next compartment; but not to sleep, because a carpenter, who had the bed opposite mine, told me the whole story of his life which was extremely melancholy. The volunteer appeared later; he had been educated in the Cadet-Corps, and I asked him if he would soon be an officer. "I will never be an officer," he answered; "I don't want

to be one *now*." I asked him if a statement I had read in the newspapers was true to the effect that several officers had telegraphed to the Government that unless they were relieved of police duty they would resign. He said it was quite true; that general discontent prevailed among officers; that the life was getting unbearable; that they were looked down upon by the rest of the people, and besides this they were ordered about from one place to another. He liked the officers whom he was with very much, but they were sick of the whole thing. Then towards one in the morning I got a little sleep. As soon as it was daylight everybody was up, making tea and busily discussing politics. The priest and the tradesman were having a discussion about the Duma, and every one else, including the guard, was joining in.

"Do you understand what the Duma was?" said the tradesman; "the Duma was simply the people. Do you know what all that talk of a movement of liberation means? It means simply this: that we want control, responsibility. That if you are to get or to pay five roubles or fifty roubles you will get or pay five roubles or fifty roubles, not more and not less, and that nobody will have the right to interfere; and that if some one interferes he will be responsible. The first thing the Duma asked for was a responsible Ministry, and the reason why it was dissolved is that the Government would not give that."

The priest said that he approved of a Duma, but unless men changed themselves no change of government was of any use. "Man must change inwardly," he said.

"I believe in God," answered the tradesman, "but it is written in the Scripture that God said: 'Take the earth and cultivate it,' and that is what we have got to do; to make the best of this earth. When we die we shall go to Heaven, and then"—he spoke in a practical tone of voice which settled the matter—"then we shall have to do with God." The priest took out his Bible and found a passage in the Gospel. "This revolutionary movement will go on," he said, "nothing can stop it now; but, mark my words, we shall see oceans of blood shed first, and this prophecy will come true," and he read the text about one stone not being left on another.

Then they discussed the priesthood and the part played by priests. "The priests play an abominable part," said the tradesman; "they are worse than murderers. A murderer is a man who goes and kills some one. He is not so bad as the man who stays at home and tells others to kill. That is what the priests do." He then mentioned a monk who had preached against the Jews in the South of Russia. "I call that man the greatest criminal, because he stirred up the peasants' blood, and they went to kill the Jews. Lots of peasants cease to go to church and say their prayers at home because of this. When the Cossacks come to beat them, the priests tell them that they are sent by God. Do you believe they are sent by God?" he asked, turning to the bearded peasant.

"No," answered the peasant; "I think they are sent by the devil." The priest said that the universal dominion of the Jews was at hand. The tradesman contested this, and said that in Russia the Jews assimilated themselves to the people more than in

other countries. "The Jews are cunning," said the priest; "the Russians are in a ditch, and they go to the Jews and say: 'Pull us out.'" "If that is true," said the tradesman, "we ought to put up a gold statue to the Jews for pulling us out of the ditch. Look at the time of the *pogroms*, the rich Russians ran away, but the richest Jews stayed behind." "They are clever; they knew their business. If they stayed you may be sure they gained something by it," said the merchant from Kursk. "But we ought to be clever, too," said the tradesman, "and try and imitate their self-sacrifice. Look at the Duma. There were twenty Jews in the Duma, but they did not bring forward the question of equal rights for the Jews before anything else as they might have done. It is criminal for the priests to attack the Jews, and if they go on like this the people will leave them."

"Whereas," said the merchant from Kursk thoughtfully, "if they supported the people the people would never desert them." "The priests," said one of the other nondescript people, "say that Catherine the Second is a goddess; and for that reason her descendants have a hundred thousand acres. General Trepoff will be canonised when he dies, and his bones will work miracles."

The guard joined in here, and told his grievances at great length. They discussed the assassinations of Hertzenstein and Admiral Chouchnin. "Hertzenstein never did any one any harm," some one said; "Chouchnin condemned hundreds and hundreds of people to death."

At one of the stations a fresh influx of people came,

among others an old peasant and a young man in a blouse. The old peasant complained of the times. "Formerly we all had enough to eat; now there is not enough," he said. "People are clever now. When I was a lad, if I did not obey my grandfather immediately he used to box my ears; now my son is surprised because I don't obey him. People have all become clever, and the result is we have got nothing to eat." The young man said the Government was to blame for most things. "That's a difficult question to be clear about. How can we be clear about it? We know nothing," said the old peasant. "You ought to try and know, or else things will never get better," said the young man. "I don't want to listen to a *Barine* like you," said the old peasant. "I'm not a *Barine*, I am a peasant, even as thou art," said the young man. "Nonsense," said the old peasant.

The discussion was then cut short by our arrival at St. Petersburg.

CONCLUSION

THIS book admits of no real conclusion, since its sole object is to throw a few side-lights on a struggle which is still going on, and which is possibly still in its infancy. My experience of it so far leads me to believe that there are only two sides in this struggle (although at first sight it appears to be infinitely more complicated), and that these two sides are the same which have split up all countries in all times under various names such as Roundheads and Cavaliers, or Reds and Whites.

In Russia the two classes are the defenders and the opponents of the Government, or rather of the autocracy. The former base their contentions on the affirmation that Russia is an Oriental country and that Western institutions are unsuited to the Russian people. Parenthetically, I must mention that I am not alluding to the extreme reactionaries—to those people who wish to go back to institutions which existed before the time of Peter the Great. I am referring to intelligent people who, while belonging to no political parties, simply disbelieve in the Liberal movement in Russia, consider it to be the hysterical cackling of an unimportant minority, and think that the whole matter is mere stuff and nonsense. The opinion of these people is certainly

worth considering, not because they are more impartial than others who belong to parties, since their ideas are equally based upon prejudice, but because they may be right. These people say that all talk of a Constitution is beside the mark. They argue thus:

"We must have a Constitution, just as we have an Army and a Navy, because the idea soothes the revolution-haunted breasts of foreign financiers, but we shall never have a real Constitution because we don't want one. Reforms? Oh, yes, as many as you please, on paper, signed and countersigned, but they will remain a dead letter, because they are not adapted to the character and the spirit of the nation. You cannot force Russian peasants to own land in the way Western peasants do. You can make laws telling them to do so, but if you force them you will only drive them to rebellion. Russia is like China; you can draw up a Constitution for Russia, but when it is carried out you will find that the only practical difference between the old state of affairs and the new is that the writing-table of the Minister of Foreign Affairs is to be oblong instead of round. People say that the Russian people is good and that its Government is bad, but the faults of the people are not the result of the inherent vices of the Government; the vices of the Government are the logical result of the faults, which in their turn are the inevitable complement of the good qualities, of the people. The desire for Liberal reforms based on Western examples is merely a fictitious agitation of a minority, namely, the 'Intelligenzia' or middle class, who have forgotten and lost their native traditions and instincts and have adopted and not

properly assimilated the traditions and instincts of Western Europe. They have ceased to be Russian, and they have not become European. They have taken the European banner of ideals, but they do not know what to do with it; they cannot hold it up in their weak Slav hands. The result is words, words, words. This chatter will continue for a time, and when people get tired of listening, it will cease. As for the people, the real people, they will settle their affairs with those immediately connected with them, with their landlords, &c. The Government will make plenty of reforms on paper and have a Duma; but everything will go on exactly as it was before. Because you cannot change the character of a people, and the form of government they enjoy is the result and the expression of their qualities and of their defects."

Such are the arguments I have often heard advanced by these people, and I say once more that they may be right. Three years ago I was firmly convinced that they were right, and even now I have an open mind on the subject, although two years of close contact with Russians of all classes have led me to change my own opinion, and to agree with the other equally impartial people, who are just as Russian and have just as much knowledge of the country and experience of their fellow countrymen, and who flatly deny the whole thing. According to this school, the comparison with China is wrong because the Chinese are intellectually a highly civilised nation, and the proportion of them who can read and write is large. The present *régime* in Russia is not the natural expression of national characteristics, but a fortuitous disease which has been allowed to

spread without ever having been radically treated. Neither Autocracy nor Bureaucracy is a thing which has grown out of the immemorial traditions and habits of the Russian people; Autocracy was the product of a comparatively recent change in Russian history, and Bureaucracy the accidental result of the further changes introduced by a man of genius. The Government made certain things impossible: such as education for the peasants, laws for the peasants, justice, &c.; then, when the results of these prohibitions began to make themselves felt, turned round and said: "You see what these men are like; it is no use giving them anything because they are hopeless; they are like niggers and must be treated as such." This has been the proceeding of the Government: to prevent, prevent, and prevent again; and then, when the explosion resulting from the prevention occurred, to observe how right they had been in preventing, and how necessary it was to prevent more and more, because it was the only thing the people understood. In this blindness and obstinacy, year after year deferring the payment of their debt, they have let the interest accumulate; and when they eventually have to pay, far more will be required of them than they need originally have surrendered.

The people who represent these two schools of thought both say that they are Russia. They assert: "We are Russia—tout le reste est littérature." Only time can show which is right. I have noticed that with the representatives of both these schools the wish is father to the thought and that they generalise on their own desires and their own experience coloured by those desires. Which really represents Russia, we shall

know perhaps in ten years' time. As far as my own experience goes among peasants, workmen, &c., they have all been representatives of the second school. But then, the first school would say that this is immaterial, because the people may be thirsty for law, and yet incapable of drinking it.

But those who belong to the second school, and without following any party are liberal in thought and deed, say to their opponents: "If it is true that what you represent is really Russia, we have no further wish to remain Russians, and the day you are proved to be in the right, we will emigrate and settle in Turkey, in Persia, or in China."

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